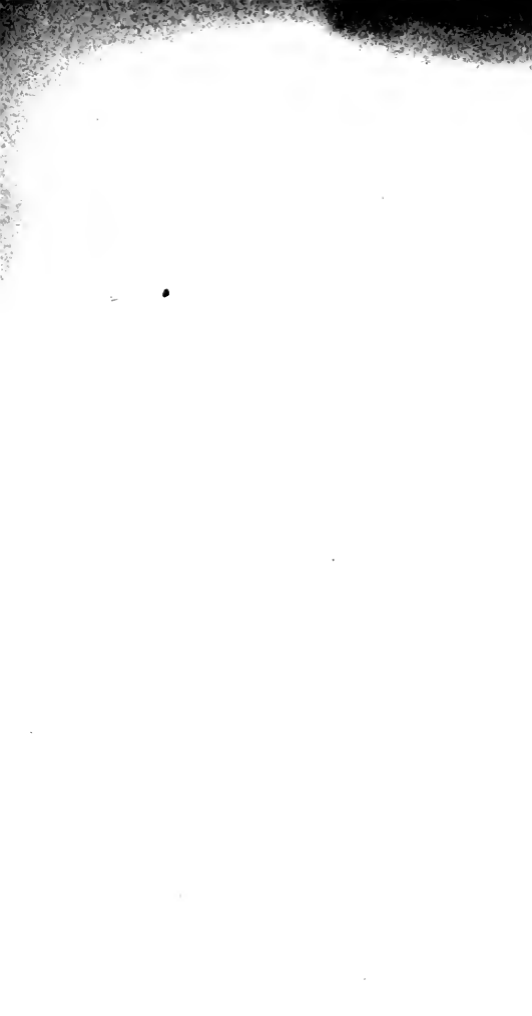


ST JEROM.









DISCE VIVERE.

LEARN TO LIVE.

BY

CHRISTOPHER SEFTON DEE

LATE PREBEND OF WESTMINSTER.

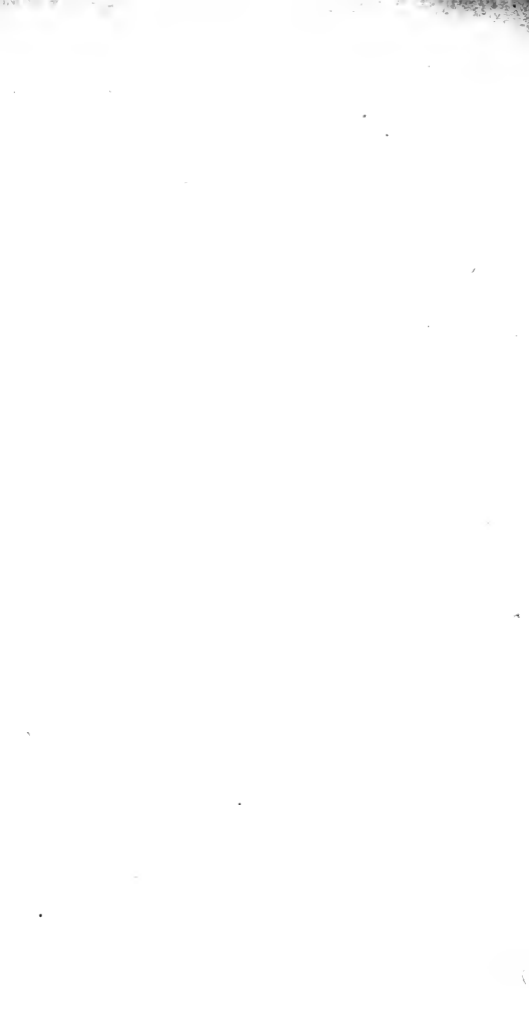
"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts
unto wisdom." Psalm L.

A NEW EDITION.

OXFORD:

JOHN HENRY LARKIN

MDCCCXLI.



Disce vivere :

L E A R N E

TO LIVE.

Wherein is shewed,
that the life of Christ is,
and ought to be, an expresse
*patterne for imitation vnto
the life of a Christian,
so far as in him lieth.*

MATTHEW 23. 12.

Discite ex me, &c.

Learne of me.

JOHN 13. 15.

Dedi vobis exemplum, &c.

I haue given you an insample.

Printed at *London* by *I. D.*

for *Nicholas Bourne*, at the

Royall Exchange, 1626.





P R E F A C E.

THE following work was written by its Author after his "Disce Mori," and before his "Godly Meditations on the Lord's Supper;" and it may be said to come between them also in respect to the depth and seriousness of tone in which it is written. The unusually fervent language of his last work, the Meditations, was suggested by its peculiarly sacred subject; the "Disce Mori," on the other hand, which was his first, treating a subject which belongs to natural as well as revealed religion, admitted of reflections derived from a variety of sources, besides those which are especially of a Christian or Gospel character. In the work which came next, the "Disce Vivere," he moulded his materials, after the manner of à Kempis, into an "Imitatio Christi;" each chapter inculcating some duty

upon the pattern of Him who gave Himself to be the beginning and the end of all perfection. Subsequently, it seems to have been the author's wish to frame his former treatise upon the same model, and in an edition later than the publication of the "Disce Vivere," which has been followed in the Oxford reprint of the present year, he prefixed a chapter on the imitation of our Lord's death with this purpose, as far as a mere addition might stand in the place of a rearrangement.

The present work is printed from the last edition in the Author's lifetime, that of 1626; in the Preface, however, the original text is retained, the alterations afterwards made in it having been apparently dictated by circumstances of the day, which need not be taken into account now.

J. H. N.

Feast of St. Simon and St. Jude,
1839.



TO THE

HONOURABLE AND VIRTUOUS

His very good Lady

THE LADY ELIZABETH SOUTHWELL.

AMONGST arts and sciences, right virtuous Lady, there is none without comparison more beseeming our Christian care and learning, than that which teacheth to live well and godly whilst we are here, that afterward we may live eternally when we are departed hence. For most sure it is, that upon this moment of time, a moment of great moment, depends either an unrecoverable loss, or an happy welfare in the world to come. And from hence it is, that I call the well ordering of our life in this world "a learning to live." A learning, because it is a matter of labour and study: to live Christian-like, to live, because without good and godly life, we are said rather to be, than live.

To stir up our dulness to this learning, I have thought good to lay before the eyes of the well-disposed Christian, the tenor of the life of Christ, the best pattern for imitation of living that ever the world had. Children will follow their parents: nature doth teach the bees to go forth at the very voice of their king or leader: we may go to school to these small creatures; we have not only the voice of our heavenly King and Leader, but according to His humanity, His example of life also to call us forth to gather the pleasant sap of several virtues, that so at the eventide of our age, we may return loaden with the sweet honey of holiness, unto that safe hive of everlasting peace.

To incite, or stir us up to the imitation of this most divine life of our Saviour, there do arise three principal

motives for our better instruction in this lesson of "learning to live." The first is drawn from the less to the greater, as thus; we should be humble, meek, patient; Christ the Son of God our Redeemer was so. The second is taken from his conversation amongst men; we should be helpful unto others, loving to our friends, charitable to our enemies, for this our Redeemer did. The third is from the end of all our actions, the harvest of all our labours, we ought to endure the crosses and calamities of the world; our Redeemer Christ endured them, and so entered into His glory.

How little this learning is thought upon, much less practised in these days, we see it too apparently before our eyes. Of this St. Chrysostom complained long ago, taxing the carelessness of Christians in his time, when he willed men either to have *opera secundum professionem*, that is to say, "works according to their profession:" or, *professionem secundum opera*, "a profession agreeable unto their works." For this default, there needs no further proof but experience, when some, that which I am sorry to mention, have little of Christianity except the name.

Other treatises, right virtuous Lady, I confess have their force to call men to the amendment of life: but by this of taking a survey of the life of Christ, both men and women, yea, every age, and every dignity of this world, is more effectually stirred up to godly life than by any other mean, when they truly consider the blessed life of Christ their only Saviour and Redeemer, seeing of Christ they are called Christians.

Madam, I humbly commend the discourse itself, such as it is, unto your Ladyship's gentle acceptation, and your Ladyship evermore in my prayers to God: and so I rest,

Your Honour's,
in dutiful sort to be commanded,
CHRISTOPHER SUTTON.



THE PREFACE

TO THE

CHRISTIAN READER.

IF to live were no other but to draw in and to breathe out the soft air, as the Wise Man speaketh, a needless labour were it, good Christian reader, to lay down any instructions unto the world, of "learning to live;" for this is done naturally, both of men and beasts, without any teaching or learning at all.

If to live were no other but to cast about for the favour and riches of the world, as some men are wont to call it, the way to live, then would it soon follow, the greater Machiavelians, the better liver; somewhat more there is required to live Christianly than so, somewhat more, I say, and that all shall one day find, than either drawing in and breathing out the soft air, or the plotting to compass the pleasures and profits of the world. It was Balaam's wish, "Let me die the death of the righteous^a," it should have first been his practice to live the life of the righteous. The

time we spend as we do, for the most part, consuming our days in vanity, and our years in folly, to say a plain truth, as in the sight of God, is rather a death than life; for life is not that which is measured by the number of years, it is the religious, honest, sober and harmless conversation, that draweth to an honourable age amongst men here, and to eternal happiness with God hereafter.

Now the general decay of this Christian course, is the general course of these sinful days, wherein so many have just cause to cry out, This is a wicked world, a wretched world, an ungodly world; such as our forefathers before us never saw. With the buyer, every one can say, It is nought, it is nought: "but for all this," saith St. Austin^b, "a profession it is, but no amendment is seen;" religion is become nothing less than religion, to wit, a matter of mere talk; such politizing is there on all parts as a man cannot tell who is who; so little sincerity in regard we have of our souls, as if we had no souls at all.

When Plato saw the Argentinians live so unreformedly as they did, "Surely these men," quoth he, "live as if they should never die." Whatsoever men for fashion's sake may give out in words, it is to be feared there is in some no firm belief of another world settled in their hearts. Eli said, "This is not well;" young men without obedience, old men without devotion, Christians without charity; it would make one's heart to mourn to consider seriously the calamity of our time, when

^b Aug. de Temp. Nat. Serm. 30.

there needs no more, but as Philip said unto Nathanael, "Come and see^c."

Without all, peradventure Christianity is much out of frame, if we consider things aright; we are generally Christians in name, but in action nothing-less, far from the old Christianity of the world, howsoever we are ready to control all that ever lived, and will not stick to censure the blessed Saints of Heaven. Our boldness is great, and I pray God our security do not mar all in the end.

Cornelius, Cornelius, thy almsgiving and thy prayers in this sense also are ascended up into Heaven^d, for where are they to be found amongst us here on earth? In times past, Christians vowed themselves to all holiness of life, they served God in hunger and thirst, in watching and praying night and day; they cared not to be poor unto the world, so they might be rich unto God; to be pilgrims, or as banished men upon the earth, so they might be citizens in Heaven. These holy friends of Christ, as confessors, Martyrs, virgins, devout Christians of all sorts, men fearing God and eschewing evil; these gave evident testimony to the world, whose servants they were. It was once the complaining wish of Cæsar, "O that we had such soldiers as were in the time of Alexander the Great!"

Live we do; is it to God? I would to God it were! We pass on for a while, after a fashion, such as it is, but is all this to live Christianly? No, verily: so a private estate in this world be provided for, let all sink or

^c John i. 46.

^d Acts x. 4.

swim for the world to come ; we respect ourselves only, neglecting all others. “ Christ pleased not Himself,” saith the Apostle, with us it is otherwise ; and yet we think ourselves perfect Christians, in that great knowledge we have, for we sin not so much of ignorance as of negligence, we know but little as we ought. What availeth it to have Pharaoh’s glory and Pharaoh’s ignominy ? Ahab’s vineyard and Ahab’s destruction ? the rich man’s life and the rich man’s death ? What blindness is it in seeking riches or honour ! “ Wilt thou perish,” saith St. Austin, “ for that which perisheth ? ” Thus we go on, and that which is worse, we cannot tell when we shall make an end : thus we live and thus we die.

What other remedy in this estate of things, the disease being so general as it is, and the gangrene spread almost into every part, than with the ruler in the Gospel, who, when there was no way but one in the sight of man, with his sick son he comes unto Christ with his “ Lord, come down, or ever that my son die e ; ” or to renew that petition of the prophet David, “ It is time, Lord, that Thou have mercy upon Sion, yea, the time is come f.” All that men can do in this case is to observe the manner of loving friends, who in visiting the sick party, every one brings somewhat, by the grace of God, to further his health ; for while God doth afford space for repentance, we may not despair of any one’s conversion in particular, and so long as loving, He vouchsafeth us the light of His truth and Gospel, we

e John iv. 47, 49.

f Psalm cii. 13.

should not cast off all hope concerning the amendment of all in general: and therefore to advise men for the best, it is their care to whom God hath commended in His own stead a fatherly care of souls; those of their religious orders beyond the seas, to do them no wrong, but to give them their right, bend their studies, many of them, to treat of devotion; and their treatises of this quality, some of them are learned and laudable; while busy heads are about "mint and cummin^g," while factious statists^h are working mischief, men better advised according to their vocation respect weightier matters of the law; which we all should respect, remembering there is a necessity laid upon us to live well: we run for a wager, we fight for a garland.

In seeking to repair devotion and piety, which this world hath well near lost, we will be as ready as themselves, and in honouring our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath honoured us all, we will go with them hand in hand: we hope one day to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, howsoever uncharitable, unpriestly, and unchristian censurers in many spiteful pamphlets give out against us. It is true, the sinfulness of this age is great, with sighing hearts we wish it were otherwise, and with the Publican say, "Now God be merciful unto us, for we are sinners." But, sirs, are we alone in this defect of godliness? Your own writers will tell you, No: unhappily your own experience can tell you, No: seeing iniquity, like the darkness of Egypt,

g Matt. xxiii. 23.

h [Statists, ed. 1602.]

hath spread itself over the face of the earth. Would to God this bitterness were left on both sides ! When Michael fought against the dragon, Michael and his angels fought, they fought not angels against angels : should we fight Christians against Christians ? Moses would not have an Hebrew smite an Hebrew. There is a common adversary of us all, who lieth in wait like a subtle spy, whose desire is to make discord and trouble in earth, because he can trouble Heaven no more.

Well, let busy meddlers content themselves and serve God humbly in their calling ; let them cease to trouble the peace of this Church and commonwealth, which Jesus Christ long continue, remembering that of Gamaliel, “ If this counsel be of men it will come to nought, but if it be of God you cannot destroy it^h.” Sufficient to salvation, and that which every well-disposed man may use to his soul’s health, is truly taught by the grace of God, notwithstanding some turn the grace of God to liberty : the best means to restrain this liberty are daily wished, and some good success would ensue if every one would apply himself to the exercises of Christian piety in his own practice.

Were we no other but plain natural men, God giving us reason and understanding, we are hence moved to pass our time orderly whilst we are here : it is our common saying, “ Better unborn than untaught ;” but being Christian men, merciful Lord, should we not remember the happy hope we all have or ought to have.

In the Articles of our Creed we mention an everlast-

ing life after death, and acknowledge a judgment to come : O, good God, that we should live as if Hell fire were no other but a poetical fiction ! Assuredly we do our calling open injury, acknowledging the holy catholic Christian faith, when our profession promiseth one thing and our practice performeth another.

Is it not wonderful that we should even forget Whose creatures we are ? yet this we do ; all know their beginning was from God, and that after awhile in God they must end : now for to spend this space between the beginning and the end in undutiful sort toward Him, were in very reason unreasonable.

The Apostle St. Paul speaketh of some men, who indeed confess God, “ bnt by their works,” saith he, “ they deny Him ⁱ ;” so God is denied as by evil words, so by evil works.

The old writers tell us of a kind of people called Onocentauri and Hippocentauri, which in one part have the form of men, in another of beasts : what other are they, who as men have a part rational, but as sensual men are indeed bestial ? do they so much as bethink themselves that man is a creature capable of happiness ? If Adam were alive to name all things, as at the beginning, is it likely he would call them Christians, that is, a people dedicated and consecrated to the service of Jesus Christ ? should we flatter ourselves, and so in the end deceive ourselves ? Why “ there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ ^k :” true, there is none to them, saith St. Paul, “ which walk not after the flesh but

ⁱ Titus i. 16.

^k Rom. viii. 1, 2.

after the Spirit." Hath the blood of Christ cleansed us from all our sins ? then from the sin of security, saith St. Austin. It is not a bare historical faith that brings us by and by to Heaven, howsoever we walk on in the vanity of our minds. St. Paul saith, " We have not so learned Christ^l," as if our learning of Christ doth teach us another lesson than so.

When we see a vineyard well manured and ordered, we by and by say it hath a good keeper ; shall we not say the same of a life well ordered ? It is a glory unto the vine when the branches are fruitful ; it is a joy unto the father when the son is dutiful : we are the branches, Christ is the vine ; we are His children, He is our Father ; " Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in us all^m." Being Christians we are the Lord's heritage, and the Lord's heritage should be holy unto Him. Wherefore the name Christian, saith an ancient Father, is a name of justice, a name of goodness, a name of integrity, of patience, of humility, of innocency, of piety ; and he rightly beareth this name who never beareth malice in his heart, who followeth Christ's doctrine, and endeavoureth Christ's example, that blessed Pattern for imitation.

The skilful painter having now proposed unto himself some excellent work, all his study and care is to express in as lively manner as he can, the form laid out before him : the life of Christ our Saviour, according to His humanity, is laid out before us as a goodly table ; our best art and industry is required to work according

^l Ephes. iv. 20.

^m Ephes. iv. 6.

to this form, and to labour seriously until Christ be formed in us, as the Apostle speaketh^a; that is, until some form or resemblance of Christ appear in us, who bear His name, for the feature of the father is often seen in the face and countenance of the child.

Rude work, God knows, they make, who never either regard the pattern set before them, or any way respect the well ordering of the pencil, and so draw such monstrous and ugly forms, as themselves may be sorry to see. "Should I call him a Christian," saith one, "in whom there is no act of Christianity, no conversation of justice, who oppreseth the miserable, who maketh many poor to make himself rich, whose mouth is polluted with untruths, and so forth^b?" Whom do proud men fashion or shadow out less than the Son of God, Who humbled Himself, that we might be exalted? Whom do revenging stomachs less resemble, than Him, Who meekly prayed for His enemies? Christ saith, "Have I been so long with you, and have you not known Me^c?"

To call ourselves a little to a consideration of that which is comely, "An instinct there is," saith the philosopher, "even born with us, which is wont to move all men naturally, to desire to learn or attain knowledge^d:" now what learning more behoveful than that which instructeth us to live in this world, as we may live eternally in the world to come? "We often study many arts, sometimes only to know," saith St. Ber-

^a Gal. iv. 19.

^b S. Aug. de vita Christi.

^c John xiv. 9.

^d Arist. Metaphys. lib. I. chap. i.

nard, "which is curiosity; sometimes to be known, which is vanity;" the art of arts, to live well, is little thought upon, much less studied. "We are born, yea, and we draw to our end too," as the Wise Man speaketh, "and shew no token of virtue."

Sometimes by fits we praise devotion, but never settle ourselves to practise it; now and then we cast out a little commendation of godliness, but we leave, when we come to the following of it, like dastardly soldiers, that can rail upon their enemies; we speak against vices, but never take arms to encounter them: happily, we can talk of a Christian course, but in short time we are such strangers to all we spake of, as all comes to nothing, as if we only dreamed of something to be done, now all vanisheth; in our best moods we seem to be willing to "Learn to Live" Christianly; marry, we complain we have none to teach us, or if we have, Who are there, we say, in this world, so barren of piety, that by their example will come forth, and go before us? It cannot be denied that we are as much, if not more, moved by good examples, as we are by good instructions; but what say we to that Teacher, Who hath both examples and instructions!

"Then look we unto the life of Christ," saith St. Chrysostom, "and we shall find it the philosophy of the simple, the nurse of young men, the meat of strong men, the buckler of weak men, the physic of sick men, the book full of divine instructions, fit for all men^e."

"Those who apply themselves," saith St. Austin,

^e S. Aug. de discip. Christ.

“to any of the liberal arts or sciences, are wont to make choice of some especial author, whose precepts before other they observe and follow :” what better author than the Author of all righteousness? what better learning than that of which Christ is the Teacher? His Church is the school, those which learn are Christians, that which is learned is religion, and the end of this learning is to live eternally. Again, whereas examples are likened unto living laws, what example more lively than the life of Christ? It is said that the devout life of a certain holy man in Egypt in his time brought many others to observe the same holiness; if the example of a good man could avail so much, what should the example of the Son of God do? Wherefore no better form for direction to Christians in “Learning to Live,” than evermore to have before them the life of Christ. “He never errs,” saith St. Jerome, “who followeth the Truth, Him let us follow Whom we all confess ought to be followed f.”

Wherefore, in the setting down some plain and brief manner of “Learning to Live,” methought there was no better method, than only to mention the most Divine actions of our Redeemer, that not so much my small labours, as the life of Christ might lay down unto well disposed Christians a form of “Learning to Live.” The more ample and exquisite dilating hereof I leave to greater clerks, myself am content for this time being required whereof I might not deny, as before of “Learning to Die,” so now to treat somewhat of

f S. Hieron. de bene mod. virtut.

“ Learning to Live ;” and in both to submit my imperfections to better judgment, and my meaning to the honest minded, who are wont to take good meaning to the best : take, therefore, gentle reader, this treatise for our better Christian learning, to live Christianly as we ought, taken out of the life of Christ, the best pattern for imitation that ever this world had.

To them who are passing through dark places, any light, be it never so little, may stand them in stead ; to him who wandereth in unknown ways, any small direction is acceptable, be it never so small, so it point him towards the way wherein he should pass : the traveller in a foreign country, meeting with somebody that speaks his natural language, though it be but harshly, yet it is some comfort unto him : we often pass in the darkness of our sensual desires, and are sometimes blinded in the mists of worldly vanities, we stray, we know not whither, any small light, the least direction, may in this case somewhat help us : “ we are strangers in this world, and from home g,” as the Apostle speaketh, to hear somewhat of our native language, that is to say of Heaven and heavenly things, though it be in the meanest manner, yet it may somewhat affect us, especially our affections being homeward.

Tobias had an angel to direct him in his journey forth and home ; when he was returned to his father’s house, the angel left him : we have in our journey to Heaven more than an angel, yea the Lord of angels, Christ Jesus ; by His example of life to go before us,

and His grace within to strengthen us : if we follow Him, He will bring us safe and sound to His, and by them to our Father's house. Will He there leave us ? No, He will there tarry and rejoice with us, and we with Him. If it be said, How should our weakness come near Him to Whom all things were possible by reason of His power ? the answer is, our good endeavours are acceptable. If we fancy unto ourselves a secure estate in that we are called Christians, it is shewed we are far wide, and how if in devotion we should see our spiritual passage from the life of grace to the life of glory, and observe that happy Christian course which tendeth unto a thrice happy end, we are directed unto the virtues of Christ all along, from virtue to virtue. If we would know whereunto all His sayings and doings, His words and works did tend, it shall appear in the application that all were for our instruction ; sometimes for the confirmation of our faith, and sometimes also for the direction of our life. If we will hear the verity of the Resurrection confirmed, which is the stay of us Christians, we are led to the Resurrection of Christ ; if of our ascending, we are moved to consider the efficacy of His ; all these, as we confess with the mouth, and believe in the heart, so we must express in our lives, or our believing is no believing. It is said of Mary Magdalen, not that she professed much, but " she loved Christ much^h ;" Faith and Hope are busy above in Heaven, Charity is there too, and yet is diligently here beneath on earth.

^h Luke vii. 4.

Many Christians, I doubt not, there are in the world, who think within themselves, had they lived but near Christ their Saviour, when He was conversant here on earth, how willingly would they have left this world, with all the desires thereof, to have been His followers ! What love, what service, with Mary, would they have done at His very feet, and with what affection ! Christ the treasure of our hearts is above in Heaven, His followers are we on earth, while we observe His precepts, express His virtues, embrace His merits, extol His mercies : we do Him service, and service of love, when we are down in devotion at the footstool of His mediation, we honour Him Who hath so much honoured us with so high a title, for of Christ are we called Christians, to have part with Him, when our "light doth so shine before men, as we glorify our Father which is in Heaven¹;" which light sheweth that our happiness is folded up in the bosom of hope.

And this is briefly the sum, good Christian reader, of that which is mentioned more at large in the following treatise of "Learning to Live," which learning only teacheth to become good men by the grace of God; it now remaineth that we all apply ourselves to the practice thereof. Time will away. Hippocrates exhorting some to the study of that learning, which doth concern the health of the body, would have them make all possible expedition they could; his reason was, "Art is long, life is short;" the same may be said of that art which concerneth the health of the soul. Should we

¹ Matt. v. 16.

wax white before we begin? God forbid. Here we follow Christ in the state of grace, hereafter we shall reign with Him in the state of glory.

In the mean while plain dealing is best on all parts : “ To a right faith,” saith St. Austin, “ let us join a right conversation^k ;” yea, and let us all join together who are Christians, to meditate devoutly of the life of Christ ; for were the life of our Saviour more thought upon, we should soon have a better world than we have, and men would more remember another world than ordinarily they do. “ The birds of the air have nests, and the foxes have dens, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head^l.” “ What is that ?” saith St. Austin, “ many ambitious and soaring desires, subtle and ungodly devices, have nests and dens in our hearts ; but a remembrance of our Lord Jesus, which should take peaceable possession of our souls, can have no entrance at all, in which case we rather want tears than cause of tears.

To conclude, the special means in helping to reform what is amiss this way, as hath been now said, is that every well disposed Christian, who keeps a careful watch over his soul, and is desirous to live worthy of his calling here, until he come to live eternally, begin with the best attention his best devotion can yield, to take a diligent survey of the life of Christ, Whose soul-saving love is the loadstone of our hearts ; Whose sayings and doings are a law unto our lives, a lantern to light our steps, the guide to direct our journey, the compass

^k S. Aug. de ver. Apost.

^l Matt. viii. 20.

to steer our ship, and, last of all, the judge for to end our controversies. As “the just live by faith^m,” so the just live the life of faith; now they live the life of grace, one day they shall live the life of glory.

It is Christ and Christ alone, Who hath made a full and joyful satisfaction for our sins.

“The God of patience and consolation,” make us “followers of God, as dear childrenⁿ ;” and “grant that we be like minded one towards another after the example of Christ Jesus. Amen^o.”

It ought to be worthy of thy observation, good Christian reader, remember it is God’s; if otherwise, it is mine own.

CHRISTOPHER SUTTON.

^m Hab. ii. 4.

ⁿ Ephes. v. i.

^o Rom. xv. 5.





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DISCE VIVERE.

LEARN TO LIVE.

CHAPTER I.

An exhortation moving every well-disposed Christian, desirous to live Christianly, often to meditate upon the most holy life of Christ.

“WHILST I was musing,” saith the prophet David, “the fire kindled^a ;” What was this fire, but the love of God ? which fire should never decay at the Altar of the Lord, to wit, the heart of man ; What was this musing, but devout meditation, the bellows to blow the sparks and kindle the flame of David’s affection ? which affection bred desire,

^a Ps. xxxix. 3.

desire caused love, love moved delight, delight brought forth labour. "Lord," saith he, "what love have I unto thy statutes? All the day long is my study in them^b."

Hereby we see that amongst the exercises of a Godly life, there is none that is wont more to elevate or lift up the mind of man to a higher degree of perfection, than devout meditation. In devout meditation, what doth more move man to love God, than the revolving of His benefits? Amongst these benefits, was there ever any comparable to that, "So God loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son?" but how gave He Him? "to be unto men both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of life^c."

So then, to meditate of the life of Him, by Whom we have eternal life, is the very life of life. To meditate, I say, of His life and manner of living, Who is both the way, and by His doctrine and example, such a director as will safely conduct unto the end of the way:

b Ps. cxix. 97. c John iii. 16.

a subject then it is, worthy of our best, and best disposed consideration.

“ Amongst Ghostly exercises,” saith Bonaventure, “ what is more profitable or necessary to attain perfection, than a due beholding of the life of Christ? What is there found that can more arm us against the vanities and allurements of the world, or the tribulations and adversities of the same, than continually to have before the eyes of our mind, the memory of His doings and sayings, of His suffering and satisfaction made for the redemption of our souls?”

II. In which Christian meditation, so many unlooked for motives to set our love upon the love of God do occur, as they may seem not only infallible testimonies of grace present, but after a sort, gladsome presages to the believing heart, even of future glory that is to come. Abraham saw Christ^d, when the Covenant was but promised, and yet it rejoiced his heart: we see him now the Covenant is performed, and shall we not rejoice? Simeon

d John viii. 56.

was a happy man who saw Him with the eyes of his body^e, and the faithful are happy too, who see Him with the eyes of the soul.

III. "Every man," saith Seneca, "that listeth to apply himself to reading and meditation, may have private conference with Zeno, Pythagoras, Aristotle, Theophrastus, and other authors of good arts; he shall find them all at leisure to commune with him^f." But a thousand times more truly may it be said of the devout soul, that she may daily commune and converse with Jesus Christ the Author of her happiness, in reading the holy history of His most blessed life.

IV. Is it not more acceptable to see God with the shepherds at Bethlehem when the Angels sing^g, than with Moses, when he was flaming in the fire bush^h, to which he might not come near? To hear Him upon Mount Tabor preach blessedness after blessednessⁱ, than upon Mount Sinai, when through lightning and thundering^j it was present death for

e Luke ii. 30. f f Seneca de Brevitate Vitæ. g Luke ii. 14.

h Exod. iii. 2. i Matt. v. 3—11. j Exod. xix. 18.

the people to approach? It was spoken as a testimony of the love of God unto the Israelites; Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of a fire^k? but this is a greater; Did ever people hear Him before^m speak by His own Son^l?

V. Ought we not often in soul to go with the wise men to Bethlehem^m, by the direction of the star of graceⁿ, and there fall down and worship the little King; there offer the gold of charity, the frankincense of devotion, the myrrh of penitency; and return, not by cruel Herod, or by troubled Jerusalem, but another way, a better way, unto our long and happy home.

How should we seek Him sorrowing with blessed Mary^o, and never leave seeking until we find him! How should we accompany Him with the Apostles, beholding Him doing wonderful miracles! How should we, with the women, follow Him unto the cross,^p and there condole His most bitter, yet blessed

k Deut. iv. 12.

l Heb. i. 2.

m Luke ii. 15.

n Matt. ii. 11.

o Luke ii. 48.

p Luke xxiii. 49.

Passion ! How should we descend in meditation whither He descended ; rise early with Mary Magdalene, come to the sepulchre and see His resurrection^q ! with the men of Galilee, wonder at His ascension up into Heaven^r, and with joyful admiration expect His coming again in the same form He ascended, with power and glory ! last of all, How should we with the disciples continue in prayer, tarry at Jerusalem, the Church or vision of peace, waiting for the coming of the Holy Ghost from above !

VI. The more we love Christ, the more we meditate of His love ; where our treasure is, that is, the thing we most affect, there are also the cogitations of our hearts. What greater treasure than Jesus Christ, the very mine where do lie millions of treasure, the great stock employed for our use ! On whom should we rather bestow our hearts than upon Him who is the joy of our hearts ? or where-to ought we rather to employ our best labours, than where the best reward of our labours is

q Luke xxiv. 1.

r Acts i. 11.

had? and to hold Him, as Jacob did the Angel, not letting Him go until He bless us.

VII. But to come to that which concerns the direction of Christian life. Where in the whole world shalt thou sooner find true humility, perfect charity, obedience, patience without example, fervent prayer, with many coadjoined and allied virtues, than in the life of Him who was the Lord of virtues? Consider how humbly He behaved Himself in the world, how fellow-like with His apostles, how merciful He was to the poor and distressed, who seemed His special family. He despised none, although lepers, He flattered none, though never so glorious. Free He was from the distracting cares of the world, Whose care was His Father's will^r and man's good. How patient was He in bearing reproaches, how gentle in His answers, thereby to cure and salve the envy of His adversaries.

“Thou hast, O Christian soul,” saith St. Austin, “in the life of Christ^s a most heavenly medicine to help all thy defects.

What pride is there that His humility doth not abase? What anger that His gentleness doth not lenify? What covetousness that His poverty doth not salve? What heart is there so benumbed, that His love doth not inflame? In every way, here we behold what to imitate, what to admire; here we learn what to fly, what to follow.

“Where shall we find the misery of man better salved, the goodness of God more manifested, love and grace more enlarged, than in meditating of the life of Christ? Where is there in the world a mean to avoid sin, better learned than in His life, Who was without sin?”

VIII. The loving captain would that the soldier sometimes behold the wounds received in his behalf, thereby to take comfort and courage. The Martyr, calling to mind Christ crucified upon the cross, endureth trying and frying flames of greatest persecutions so patiently, as if, the soul exiled from the body by a divine meditation, both body and soul were in part become senseless, and made to live, not where

they live but where they love, that is to say, in Christ.

This made the holy men of God so full of devotion, so great despisers of the world as they were; their chiefest care was to care for a time to come, their continual meditation was the mystery of human redemption and the accomplishment of their hope in another world. Festus thought St. Paul had over studied himself^t, when the Apostle's mind was fixed upon the greatest mystery of the Passion and Resurrection and judgment to come. Had Festus known the depth of this, he would have thought the Apostle to have been learned indeed, and himself might have been learned also unto salvation.

Again, when we behold Christ in His Passion, we see innocency suffering for sin, humility enduring torment for pride, righteousness for unrighteousness. What charity was that, which amidst so many pains, besought God for pardon to the causers and actors of His woe! What silence was that,

^t Acts xxvi. 24.

which unto false accusers answered nothing ^u !
What love was that, which was prodigal of
life for His friends, nay, for His very enemies !
Never was there any such love, as the love of
the Son of God.

IX. We should often call to mind the life
of Christ. When labours and troubles come,
when by calamities we feel that we have of-
fended, then we fall to comparison ; when we
endure hunger, we ought to think of Christ's
fasting ; when we are tempted, we ought to
think of His leading into the wilderness to be
tempted ; when we suffer reproaches, we
ought to call to mind His mild suffering of
reproaches, and lift up our hearts to Heaven,
and our souls to Him Who bare our infirmities
and therefore we hope will in mercy respect
the case of the miserable, of Whom we may
say with the prophet, " Whom have we in
Heaven but Thee ^v ."

X. Some are not a little delighted to read
the lives of the ancient worthies of the world,
of Julius Cæsar, Scipio, Alexander, and such

^u John xix. 9.

^v Ps. lxxiii. 25. 24.

other ; but these may sooner delight the fancy than instruct the soul. Come we to the life of Christ, Solomon's wisdom was but ignorance in respect of His ; Samson's strength, but weakness ; Aszael's swiftness, dull slowness ; Methuselah's age, not a day, compared with His eternity, or that felicity which He giveth to His people ; all their glory was but froth, all their pomp was but misery to His glory, Who vanquished when He was conquered, and overcame death when He suffered death, subduing the prince of darkness with all his power, and with a few mean men made a mighty conquest over the whole world, by a force in outward show, clean contrary to all victory ; viz. by His word, which in the sight of the world seemed feebleness.

What heart is not moved at His marvellous works done for the children of men ? Who would not celebrate unto the Lord a sweet sabbath of meditation, and hither bring all his prayers and praises ? surely we do little for Him, who hath done so much for us, if we keep not at least a remembrance of so

many graces and of so many mercies bestowed upon us! Should we be weary to meditate of His life, Who was not weary to do and suffer so many things to restore us to eternal life?

XI. God saith, "My delight is to be with the sons of men."^x And the godly say, Our delight is to be with the Son of God. St. Jerome writeth of certain holy women so devoted unto divine meditation, "that flesh," saith he, "almost forgot it was flesh^y:" they did so well in the contemplation of Jesus Christ, that they seemed in place only remote, but in affection to join with the Holy company of heaven, there beholding in that splendid theatre, the King of kings sitting under the state of glory.

The Athenians erected a place called *Asylum*, whither the poor and distressed repairing might find refuge. How God hath exalted our Lord Jesus unto the right hand of His throne in glory, and there for His sake erected an Asylum of grace, whither all sorrowful and afflicted minds repairing, may plead privilege

^x Prov. viii. 31.

^y S. Hiero. in Regula Sanct.

and satisfaction against sin, hell, death, and the devil, faith in Him doth tell us as much. When the accuser of the brethren doth lay a remembrance of their sins unto the charge of God's chosen, and thereby seeketh to cast them down by despair; by and by they fly to meditate of Christ His love, and how all sufficient a sacrifice He was for the satisfaction of their sins, and how ready He is to embrace in the arms of His mercy, and cover under the shadow of His wings, all that cry and come unto Him. Christ is called a rock^z, and in times of distress men were wont to hide themselves in rocks.

The loaves which Christ took in feeding a multitude were but few in number^a; but when He brake them and His disciples distributed them, they did exceedingly increase and multiply.

The life of Christ, when at first we consider the same, it seems not so much; but falling to meditate thereupon, and to distribute it, as it were, amongst faithful believers, it increaseth so wonderfully, as we can truly say with them

^z 1 Cor. x. 4.

^a Mark vi. 41 : Luke ix. 16.

in the Gospel, "We never saw it after this fashion;"^b in effect, we never thought it so admirable.

XIII. Last of all, how mindful, I pray you, should we be to meditate of Christ, not only in respect of the time present, but chiefly for the time to come! This was in St. Paul's thought, when he spoke of his departing hence, desiring to be dissolved and to be with Christ. Jacob leaving the world, his mind was upon Shiloh, or on Him Whom God would send, when He said, "Lord, I will wait for Thy salvation."

XIV. The Law was a shadow of good to come, this good was Christ; when the sun is behind, the shadow is before; when the sun is before, the shadow is behind: so was it in Christ, to them of old this Sun was behind, and therefore the Law or shadow was before; to us, under grace, the Sun is before; and so now the ceremonies of the Law, these shadows are behind, yea, they are vanished away! Joshua succeeded Moses, Christ the Law;

^b Mark ii. 12.

Moses dies, Joshua leads the people ; Joshua brings the people over Jordan, which Moses could not do : God took Moses into a better Canaan. The fathers did eat manna in the desert^c ; we have the bread which came down from Heaven. “ The Old Testament,” saith St. Austin, “ it was the New involved ;” the New, it is “ the Old explained ;” in the nineteenth of St. Luke, those that went before and they that followed after, they all sang, “ Hosanna to the Son of God^d.”

XV. In blessing their posterities, the Patriarchs mentioned the promised seed ; so, comforting the distressed, the Prophets foretold the Saviour to come. All their solemn Sacrifices were but figures and signs of some excellent subject ; their many hymns and divine songs were rejoicings at His coming before He came ; in their highest devotions, nothing was more mentioned than that God would respect His people, and Abraham to whom in mercy the multiplying of the same mercy by the promised offspring was men-

^c John vi. 31.

^d Mark xi. 9.

tioned. So by this we see, the faithful all along minded nothing more than Him, in Whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

XVI. For believers under grace surely they ought to be so addicted to meditate of Him who wrought the work of their redemption, who as they are conducted in their spiritual journey to the Holy Land in Heaven, not by a pillar of cloud^e, as the Israelites, but by Him that sits above the clouds; so their hearts should be replenished with an incessant revolving of His love, seeing their faith is confirmed by a continual consideration of His merits; their hope by a remembrance of His promises; their thankfulness by calling to mind His benefits; their fortitude by contemplation of His assistance; their lives directed by His life, who was the mirror of the world for perfection and true holiness; and the prophet Isaiah saith, “ This is the way, walk ye in it ^f.”

e Exod. xiii. 21.

f Isaiah xxx. 21.



CHAPTER II.

That the life of a Christian should be passed in this world in an holy and virtuous conversation.

“THEREFORE,” saith St. Austin, “hath God given unto every one of us, of Christ to be called a Christian, that in our name we should evermore retain a perpetual memory of Christ, from Whom we are called Christians.”

He is not a branch that draweth not some juice from the root, nor he a Christian that hath not some resemblance of Christ, from whom he is called a Christian. It is the manner of princes and governors forthwith upon their investitures to places of greatest dignity, seriously to recount with themselves to what authority amongst men God hath called them, what to do, how to govern, and in conclusion which way to demean themselves like themselves; that is to say, answerable unto their

name and calling. This care we find to have been in king Solomon^g, who in regard of the dignity whereunto God had called him, besought God, before riches and honour, to give him an understanding heart. No less care should every Christian man and woman have, whom God hath in mercy called to the estate of grace, a calling of excellency; no less care, I say, should they have of their conversation, to sit down and consider for what cause they were redeemed, to what end, what will one day be required at their hands, upon His return, that did send them hither, and preserved them whilst they were here.

II. When Naaman the Syrian was healed of his leprosy^h by the power of Almighty God, he was so moved to acknowledge this benefit well, that while the knees of his body might bow in the house of Rimmon, a false God, yet when he came there he made a solemn vow the knees of his soul should bend to the true God, whom he perceived to have done him good.

g 2 Chron. i. 10.

h 2 Kings v. 18.

When Peter's wife's mother perceived she was cured of her fever, she rose up and ministered unto Christⁱ. When the people saw the care of Joshua, which he undertook to bring them into the land of Canaan, they all said as it were with one heart, "O Joshua, all that thou commandest we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go^k." We have received greater cure than Naaman, or than Peter's wife's mother did: some bending of our hearts, some ministering unto Christ should be remembered, and let our Joshua have His due, Who leads us unto that everlasting Canaan, that is above in Heaven.

II. When Zacharias mentioned the love of God, what He had done in visiting and redeeming His people^l, in raising them up a mighty salvation, in delivering them from the hands of their enemies, he consequently annexed the end of all, and what they should now do to God; to wit, "serve Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life^m."

ⁱ Matt. viii. 15.

^k Joshua i. 16.

^l Luke i. 68, 69.

^m Luke i. 75.

The Apostle St. Paul sheweth us this reflex of duty arising from mercy received, in express words; "The grace of God," saith he, "hath appeared, that bringeth salvation unto all, and teacheth us that we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, that we should live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed appearance of the glory of the Mighty God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christⁿ;" thereby shewing our first entrance into grace, and therewith the works of grace, and then in order the appearance of glory. The works of grace, negatively and affirmatively; negatively, teaching to deny ungodliness: affirmatively, teaching to live soberly to ourselves, righteously to our neighbour, holily to God. For what else doth grace require, but the works of grace? therefore we beseech God, that we fall not among thieves, as the man that passed between Jerusalem and Jericho^o, which would spoil us of this precious garment, and the true use thereof. "Lord," saith David, "keep Thy

ⁿ Titus ii. 11-13.

^o Luke x. 30.

servant from presumptuous sins, that they get not the dominion over me^p.”

III. What, should the children of light have to do with the works of darkness^q? What, should Christians walk according to the flesh^r, who are by Christ their Redeemer, regenerate and born anew, for to live according to the Spirit? “Alexander,” saith Quintus Curtius, “willed that the Grecians and the Barbarians should be no longer distinguished by garments; but let Grecians,” said he, “be known by their virtues, and Barbarians by their vices.” “It is no marvel,” saith St. Chrysostom, “that Grecians live impurely, but that Christians should live so, who are partakers of so great graces of God, this is worse; yea, worst of all, yea, intolerable.”

IV. When Almighty God had brought His people from the oppression of Pharaoh, and that they were now towards a land which should flow with milk and honey, Moses soberly adviseth the people after this manner; “And now Israel, what doth the Lord require

p Ps. xix. 13.

q Luke xvi. 8.

r Rom. xiii. 12.

of thee?" and therefore He doth require somewhat of thee, "even that thou serve Him^s." If He be thy God, then will He have thy worship. He is thine in mercy, but thou His in duty.

St. Peter adviseth the dispersed Jews and converted Christians to walk as the children of God, why? "because God had called them to an admirable light^t." St. Paul, resembling the time of the Law unto the night, by reason of the dark mists and figures thereof; "the night is past, the day is come nigh^u," and the state of grace unto the day, which is a light-some time: "let us cast away," saith the apostle, "the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light." All which as it inferreth a dignity in that we are called, so withal a duty that is required of us; a small sin in the world, is notwithstanding great, in one professing Christ.

St. Bernard thought it a thing prodigious in nature "for any one to have the first place,

and the lowest life ; a high calling, and some abject course of living ; because the calling to place of dignity, doth challenge unto itself greater sincerity of life than is looked for in others of meaner condition^x." St. John saith, " He that saith he abideth in Christ, ought to walk, as He walked^v;" look whom any one doth serve, his livery he weareth to the view of the world : what a madness is it for any to boast himself to be a Christian, and to tread under his feet Christ his precepts ? " What profiteth thee," saith St. Austin, " to be called the thing thou art not^w?" To bear the title of a Christian, and to be in action nothing less ? To be a Christian in name, but not in deed ? To be a nominal, and not a real ; to seem, and not to be ? To have the voice of Jacob, but the hands of Esau ; one thing in show, but another in substance ? " What ! dost thou," saith St. Cyprian, " rush in with a blind heady zeal, thou knowest not whither nor how, extinguishing peace and charity, the true

v Bernard. lib. 2. Consid. ad Eugenium.

w 1 John ii. 6.

x S. Aug. de Vita Christ.

lights of a Christian life? Certainly vices are as blemishes in the face of Christian profession. Zeal without knowledge is a blind sacrifice, and knowledge without zeal is a maimed sacrifice; neither blind nor maimed should be offered to God. Let Christians be what indeed they be, an holy people to God. What is a Christian? sure a disciple of Christ, than Whom there is not a greater teacher. What is a Christian? one who thinketh rightly of God, worshipping Him truly, Whom truly he knoweth. What is a Christian? one than whom none is more laborious to serve God in the world, none more happy in the world to come.

V. Aulus Fulvius perceiving his son gotten upon the wings of pride, and associating himself with Catiline, that fireband of the commonwealth, comes and takes him aside, and schools him after this manner; "Thou unthrift, have I brought thee up for such an end?"

When we find our affections inclining to foul desires, let us say unto our souls as Aulus

Fulvius said unto his son, "Is this the end why God hath given us our being, and well being? Were we redeemed from sin to continue in the lusts thereof? Were we freed from the servitude of the world, to become servants again to so bad a lord? Why were we redeemed unto good works? Should so great a price bestowed for us be cast away? God forbid! Let us consider that two principal parts there are of our Christian profession, faith and good life; faith is the foundation, good life is the building that is laid upon this foundation.

Let us call to mind our adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father:" if God be our Father, then must we remember what He requireth, "Be ye Holy, for I am Holy," saith God^x: the duty of the child is the father's honour. We are resembled unto the branches, and Christ unto the vine; "every branch that beareth not fruit," that is, good life, "the husbandman," that is God, "taketh it

away^y." It is a glory to the vine, when the branches bring forth good grapes.

We are compared unto fruitful trees "planted by the waters^z," or pleasant streams of God's graces, and therefore should bring forth fruit in due season. We may remember the curse of the fig-tree that bare leaves only, some show only of fruit^j; and that sentence denounced against the other tree that bare no fruit at all^a; "And now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees, every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire^b." The axe, death; the cutting down, the execution of justice; the casting into the fire, the sentence of judgment. "And now," there will be a now; "the axe," not a rod, "to the root," not to the branches, "cast into the fire," and so there is somewhat more than a cutting down.

Daniel said unto Nebuchadnezzar, which John the Baptist in effect said unto every one that is fruitless, "This tree is thyself^c:" but

y John xv. 2. z Ps. i. 3. a Matt. xxi. 19.

b Luke iii. 9. c Dan. iv. 22.

for the good tree which bringeth forth good fruit^d, it shall be like the green olive, planted by the house of God. "Such a one," saith Jeremiah, "shall be as a tree that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not feel when the heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not care for the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit^e." But the end of the fruitless trees are to be cut down.

And thus, as the negligent are resembled to a barren heath, which, though it hath heat and moisture from above, remaineth still bare; or to trees twice dead and plucked up by the roots; as vain professors are compared unto trees which bear leaves, or at least fruit goodly and pleasant to the eye, like the apples of Gomorrah, which are gone so soon as you touch them: so are the religious and truly devoted to the worship of God most fitly likened to good and fruitful trees^f, grafted upon the true stock Christ Jesus Himself, planted in that vineyard whose keeper is the Lord of Hosts,

d Matt. vii. 17.

e Jer. xvii. 8.

f Isaiah v. 1.

and Who looks for at their hands better than wild grapes.

VI. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read that the disciples at Antioch were the first who were called Christians^g, a name of great sanctity, taken from anointing, a ceremony used among the ancient people of God, upon none but those whom they counted holy, and had an holy calling, as Kings, Priests, Prophets ; and therefore Christians should be as John the Baptist, whose name was holy, whose teaching was holy, whose life was holy, all agreeing in one. “ He was a burning light, not only burning,” saith St. Bernard, “ as zealous in fervency, but a light also as conspicuous in charity^h.”

“ But whence,” saith Isidore, “ have we this title? even from Christ are we called Christians, surely a great prerogative ; He hath graced us with His own name, cleansed us with His own blood, and called us to be a people holy unto Himself.”

The apostle saith, “ That we are bought, or

^g Acts xi. 26.

^h Bernardus in nat. John.

redeemed with a priceⁱ ;” if it be so, then are we His, Who hath paid our ransom, and consequently are bound to do His will, Who hath bought our freedom. “ We are not debtors,” saith he, “ to the flesh^k ;” to whom then? We are debtors unto the Spirit. Sarah saw Ishmael playing with Isaac, and she said unto Abraham, “ Put away the bond woman with her son^l ;” it is not safe for the soul to be dallying with the flesh ; cast off the bond woman and her offspring^m, or desires, the playing of Ishmael with Isaac, which the Holy Ghost by the apostles, calleth a persecution. One saith, “ this body of ours will not let us be sight philosophers ;” but sure it is, this corrupt nature of ours, unless we did repress the affections thereof, it would not suffer or permit us to be right Christians.

“ There is a serpent within us,” saith Macarius, “ that will entice with an argument *a jucundo*ⁿ ;” the forbidden tree is most fair, forbidden pleasures, forbidden ways are most

i 1 Cor. vi. 20.

k Rom. viii. 12.

l Gen. xxi. 10.

m Gal. iv. 29, 30.

n Macar. Hom.

delightful. "Had we," saith St. Bernard, "stood by, when Adam was between the persuasion of his wife, and the precept of his God; when one said, Adam eat, and the other, Adam thou shalt not eat, would we not have cried out and said, O Adam, take heed what thou doest, the woman is deceived! The counsel we would have given to Adam let us apply to ourselves, and never hearken to the counsel of the flesh, which as another Eve, will draw us from our obedience to our God."

The apostle calleth the desires of the flesh deceivable^o, because they deceive; and whereas other sins are mentioned by one name, this of the flesh is mentioned by many; as adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness; all these shew how vile it is. It is said, fly from sin as from a serpent, but of all sins fly fornication, saith the Holy Ghost; for this serpent stingeth to death. He that will eat so often as he is tempted by hunger, he that strikes so often as he is tempted by ire, he that will commit the sin of fornication so often as he is

^o Ephes. iv. 22.

tempted by ill motions, what hath he I say, not of a Christian man, but of a man, except the name? to follow sensuality, it is plainly bestial.

Two things there are carefully to be conserved of a Christian, his conscience and his report; his conscience to God, and his report to men. "It is not sufficient," saith St. Jerome, "to say, I care not for report, so I have a good conscience." The apostle gives another rule; "Procure things honest before God, and in the sight of all men."

VII. But is it credible that Christian profession should ever put on masking attire, and play her part on the stage? putting on "the cloke of maliciousness," as St. Peter speaketh. Or that those who bear the name of Christians, should endeavour like jugglers, to cast a mist before the eyes of the simple, work dissimulation in so fine a web, cast such a gloss upon corrupt dealing, as if all were Holy; like hot meteors in air, which shoot and shew like stars, but are indeed nothing less. For these, deceive men they may, God they

cannot; nay, they may one day find they deceive themselves. If they spend one hour or two now and then in godly exercises, though all the week after they live in contention and envy, they think themselves good Christians, these have little of Christianity but the name.

In the comedy of Menander, there is a Hercules, but not true Hercules: in the course of the world there is a Herod that pretends worship, but intends the life of an innocent babe: there is an Ahab that proclaims a fast^p, thereby to compass Naboth's vineyard: but all is not gold that glitters.

When children see a lively resemblance, they often think it some living creature, wise men know it to be but a picture; much more God, He who knoweth all things, knoweth what this is.

“ He is not a Jew, which is outwardly a Jew; neither is that Circumcision, which is outwardly in the show: but he is a Jew, which is one within; and the circumcision is of the

heart, not in the letter ; whose praise is not of men, but of God^a." One man discerneth another by his habit, but God by his heart.

"The ark," saith Origen, "was it pitched without only ? No, but within and without^r."

"The king's daughter," saith the Psalmist, "was glorious;" was this glory outward ? No, she was glorious within. The coat of Christ was without seam ; the conversation of Christians should be plain and honest, without dissimulation, or counterfeit shows of holiness.

"Behold," saith our Saviour of Nathaniel, "a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile," for behold a true Christian !

Let vain boasters talk of profession so long as they will, and make religion, as they do, a mere talk : unless they shew devotion to God, humble and charitable behaviour towards men, obedience to rulers, love to their equals, and meekness to their inferiors, are they right Christians ? No, verily. When one ill affected, was now about to be salving his sore fingers, a certain physician perceiving by his coun-

p Rom, ii, 28, 29.

r Origen in Numb.

tenance his liver was corrupt, "My friend," quoth he, "first seek to salve what is amiss within."

VIII. At the end of the day shall it be said, Call those discoursers? No, "Call the labourers; give them the penny^s." St. James saith, "Shew me thy faith by thy works^t:" I am a mortal man, and cannot search the heart. Hast thou faith? let me see it by thy actions of life. Is it a lively faith? Why, where life is, there motion is; motion is the sign of a living body, and holy conversation of a living soul. It was said indeed unto him that came unto the marriage, "Friend^u," but if we mark the sequel, it was in effect said, friend in profession, but nothing so in action; in name, but not in nature; "how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?" "This wedding garment," saith St. Austin, "is charity."

"When you see," saith St. Chrysostom, "the leaves withered, you may guess the tree

^s Matt. xx. 8.

^t James ii. 28.

^u Matt. xxii. 12.

is not sound at the root^v." Are we not rooted in faith? the bud, the leaf, the flower, the fruit, is all from the root. The fire, so long as it is fire, it hath heat; and faith, so long as it is faith, it hath effects. Wherefore we must take heed that we deal not with our holy calling, as Hanum did with David's servants, when he disguised them, and cut their garments in the midst.^w Let us not separate that which God hath joined together, a good profession, and a good conversation; good learning, and good living. A man, saith Syrac, may be known by his look, and one that hath understanding, may be perceived by his gesture; nay, a man's garment, and therefore much more his life, declares what he is.

IX. Look we into the lives of the former Christians, whose remembrance we honour in our very thoughts, and whose virtues we cannot but admire; if we read how they spent their time, we shall find that their whole course was a continual exercise of piety; they were just in promise, they needed no

v S. Chrysost. in oper. imperfect. hom. iii.

w 2 Sam. x. 4.

other surety but their word ; they were moderate in diet, plain in attire, keeping a decorum in all their actions. They did not only with Simeon see Christ with their eyes, but also take Him up with them in their hands, and carry Him about in their lives : we are, for the most part, Christians in show, they were Christians indeed : we outwardly profess somewhat, but there is a heart within meaneth nothing less ; and yet we will be called Christians : they inwardly and outwardly were the same. He said well, that said it, they were happy in respect of us, who received with humility one uniform faith ; upon this foundation they did build gold and precious stones, that is, actions of good life : we are still hampering and hammering about the very foundation, and never settle ourselves to work.

Tertullian, setting down the hardest censure which the Christians in his time had from their greatest adversaries, saith, “that excepting they would not sacrifice unto their idols, their holiness was such, as it made their

very persecutors to stand amazed at them and to cry out, What a misery is this, that we are more weary of tormenting, than these men are of enduring torments^x!" Nay, it made the greatest emperors themselves to fear poor Christians, as Herod did John Baptist, because he was a holy man, and one that feared God.

St. Basil affirmeth, that the very beholding of their constancy in suffering, made many heathen men suffer with them^y. "The devout life of a poor captive Christian woman," as Sozomen writeth, "made a king and his family to embrace the faith of Jesus Christ^z;" and Eusebius sheweth, that Maximinus the emperor could not but wonder^a to see how sedulous they were in doing good. When their very enemies were consumed with misery, they took from the small store they had, to relieve them; they buried their dead, and never cease to follow them with the works of charity: they were so religious, so humble,

x Tertull. Apologia. y De quad. Mart. z Sozom. lib. 7.

a Euseb. lib. 8. cap. 8.

so just, so charitable, as they made great tyrants to give out edicts with Nebuchadnezzar, that none should worship any other God but the God of the Christians^b.

Julian the apostate, writing to Arsadius, bishop of Cappadocia, said, "This same religion which they call Christian, is spread far and wide, by reason of the great beneficence of those whom they call Christians, to all mortal men of what religion soever." Whence we see, that the greatest enemy of the faith of Christ, could not but acknowledge the sincerity of former Christians.

Merciful Lord, to compare our coldness with their fervency; our negligence with their industry; our faint love with their burning charity; we shall find such odds, as we may sorrow to see our own defects in this case. Calling to mind the learning of the ancient Fathers, we may think they did nothing but read; seeing their works, that they did nothing but write; considering their devotion, that they did nothing but pray.

^b Dan. iii. 29.

X. How was God glorified in these? and how is God glorified in us when we truly serve Him? to this end, Christ willed His disciples that their light should shine before men ^c; and St. Peter exhorteth, that by our good works we “glorify God in the day of visitation ^d;” in effect, that we honour Christ by our Christian behaviour, which, saith St. Cyprian, “is to do the will of God, which will is, that we have steadfastness in faith, modesty in words, uprightness in action, in works mercy, in manners discipline and peace towards our brethren ^e.” Ought not our uprightness to be inwardly, because it is unto God; and outwardly, because it is unto the glory of God?

“By this,” saith our Saviour, “shall men know that ye are My disciples ^f,” when He spake of love; which love is the accomplishment of the whole Law. Every general in the field hath his colours, whereby he and his company are known; Love is Christ’s banner,

^c Matt. v. 16.

^d 1 Pet. ii. 12.

^e Cyp. in Orat. Dom.

^f John xiii. 35.

under which we all train and keep a seemly Christian march, following Christ our Captain "and finisher of our faith^g." Our enemies are the assaults of sin and temptations of Satan; our weapons are "the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit^h." "Our conquest is a crown of glory." "I have fought," saith the Apostle, "a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousnessⁱ."

XI. Look up into Heaven above, who are there rejoicing? Who are now triumphant in glory, but those who were sometime militant in the works of grace? Who are now in that celestial society of Angels, beholding the presence of God Himself, but those who sometime lived godly in the world, and were pure in heart^k? Cast we our eyes downward, to whom is that woful dungeon of darkness so often denounced, but unto dissolute and loose servants who never think of their Master's

g Heb. xii. 2.

h Ephes. vi. 17.

i 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

k Matt. v. 8.

return, and the account which will one day be required at their hands? The schoolmen do well distinguish a double punishment; the one of loss, and the other of feeling: of loss, when they lose for ever in glory Him whom they would not receive, so often offering Himself unto them; of feeling, they would not endure the pain of a little repentance, and therefore shall suffer the punishment of eternal pain.

XII. Of all figures, say the mathematicians, a circle is the most absolute, because the beginning and end concur in one; such is our holy conversation, which comes from God by grace, and ends in God by the works of grace; all our actions are from Him, as the beams from the sun, as the smell from the flower, as the spark from the fire. The sun is discerned by his beams, the flower by the smell, the fire by the sparks from thence proceeding. God is seen in His creatures, admired in His works, but most glorified in His servants, the sons of men.

We know there is in man somewhat more than man; Christ said unto the Pharisees,

when the Herodians shewed Him a tribute penny, "Whose image and superscription is this?" When we find in ourselves a most Divine and heavenly resemblance, let us say, Whose image is this? Methinks we cannot but reply, Assuredly it is our heavenly Cæsar's, and therefore give we unto Him the homage of our hearts, and if we have a thousand hearts, let us pay them all in tribute unto Him. The Angels of Heaven look for us, Jesus Christ Himself, the Lord of Angels, expects us, whom He hath chosen to be heirs of glory: should we follow the world? then may we fear the punishment of the world. What is it to gain a farm with him in the Gospel, and lose Heaven^m? What is it to be married to the momentary pleasures of a sinful life, and for ever and ever to be divorced from Christ?

There are in Holy Scripture promises laid down of an happy state to come; to whom is this promised but to the Godly? It may be well applied, which was misapplied in

l Matt. xxii. 20. m Luke xiv. 18.

the trial of the holy man Job, "We do not serve God for nothing." As sure as God is God, the righteous shall receive a reward. We know that man is immortal, and that his happiness is not here, "though that part which we see," saith Philo the learned Jewⁿ, "be mortal, and perish for a time; yet there is a time to come, when it shall be raised, and there is a part in man which abides for ever; nay, at the general resurrection both parts abide for ever."

XIII. Children when they are young, love their nurses more than their true and natural mothers; but coming unto riper years, they then love where they chiefly ought: we are a while addicted to the world, and lose ourselves in the love thereof, but upon more mature judgment, we see that God only should have our love. "It is the manner of some nations," saith one, "for the inferior first to salute the superior; and it is the custom again of other countries, as a sign of benediction, going downward, for the superior first to salute the

inferior." This custom Almighty God Himself observeth with men ; first, He salutes us by His benefits, and then we salute Him by our obedience ; first, He loveth us as a Father, then we honour Him as children. Should we with the fed hawk forget our Master ? or, being full with God's benefits, like the moon, be then most removed from the sun, from whence comes all her light, and then by the interposition of earthly desires, become dark ? Hath Christ done so much for us, and should we seem to be carried away into the land where all things are forgotten, and do nothing in serving Him ? God forbid ! At that dreadful day of doom, "the greatest part of the evidence," saith St. Cyprian^o, "that Satan will bring in against careless men, is the neglect of their dutiful serving the Lord Jesus ; when he shall say, O eternal Judge, for these, I never benefited them, I never endured labour or travail to redeem them, and yet have they followed me ; I no sooner tempted them to evil, but they obeyed me. Thou camest from

Heaven, and enduredst many things in the world to win them, and yet they never followed Thee : Thou didst shed Thy most precious Blood to save them, and yet they would never worship Thee." Hitherto St. Cyprian.

XIV. How can we then omit the performance of our Christian duty ? Should it be said of holiness as it was once in another case, " We have heard report of such a matter p," and so let it go ? Will our lip worship serve the turn ? The foolish virgins were found with their " So saying q," but the good servants shall be found with their " So doing r."

Our Isaac will not only hear Jacob's voice^s but " Come hither My son," let Me have thy hands too, and then He gives a fatherly benediction.

John sendeth his disciples to Christ, to know whether He were the Messiah that should come into the world, or they should look for another ? The answer our Saviour returneth is this ; " Tell John what you have

p Job xxviii. 22.

q Matt. xxv. 11.

r Luke xii. 43.

s Gen. xxvii. 22.

heard and seen^t ;” what you have heard only? No, but heard and seen. “He doth neither affirm nor deny,” saith Bede, “but would rather have His works testify of Him, than that He would testify of Himself^u.”

He came from Heaven to do His Father’s will on earth, and we here on earth must do His will who is now ascended up into Heaven.

XV. To comprehend many things within the circle of a short conclusion, the sum of all is ; “There is nothing more sweet than to serve God^v.” When Pythagoras heard a vicious fellow affirm he had rather spend his time in wanton company, than amongst the sour philosophers, “No marvel,” said he, “for swine had rather be tumbling in the mire, than laid in the cleanest places of all.”

There is no peace comparable to that which is wont to accompany the service of God. It is said of the Dioscorides, men living far remote, yet professing the Christian religion, that dwelling in the midst of the sea, yet have they not the use of ships ; they live with such quiet

t Luke vii. 22. u Bede in Luc. v Eccles xxiii. 27.

and content in their estate, or without any desire of seeking superfluity. "Who shall ascend," saith the Prophet, "unto the hill of the Lord, but even he that hath pure hands, and hath not lifted up his mind to vanity? he shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation^w."

Nature hath taught the bombyx, or silkworm, providing before for her end, first to wind herself all in silk, and then, she becoming white and winged, in shape of a flying thing, and so she dieth. Let grace lead us in the same course, first clothing ourselves with that precious silk of Christ, His merits, and then become white for innocency and holiness of life; and last of all, with the wings of faith and hope, prepare ourselves to fly to that heavenly repose of our everlasting rest in Christ Jesus.

w Ps. xxiv. 3—6.



CHAPTER III.

That the end of a Christian life in following Christ, is endless felicity in the life to come.

If it be true, as most true it is, whatsoever things are written, they are written for our learning, then surely is that of St. Matthew, "Whosoever followeth the Son of God in this regeneration, shall sit in the throne of His glory ^a." The sitting then in the throne of Christ His glory, is the end of a Christian life, or of our following of Him.

Infinite were it to shew how the philosophers of old, as men in a winter's night, amidst many strange and unknown ways, do run and range, they know not whither. Infinite were it, I say, to set down how they spent all their life poring in the dark, if we respect the light of grace, in seeking and searching out man's chiefest end. Some would have it

^a Matt. xix. 28.

to consist in pleasure; but if pleasure were man's chief happiness, then beasts were happy; if sensual life were man's end, then is he oft ended by his end. Some would have it to consist in riches, in honour, prosperity, and the like; but if that were so, then were man much worse than a clod of earth, because the end is ever better than those things which are tending to the end. Briefly, to sum up the total of these distractions, if man's chiefest good consisteth in things mortal, then where becomes the felicity of the soul, which is a substance immortal, as sundry of themselves do confess?

II. To leave these men in the maze of their own fancies, our Christian faith, blessed be God, teacheth us to mount higher, and to behold another end, which cannot be worn out, and therefore is not subject to fear; full of all happiness, and therefore is able to satisfy our desires to the full. The difference then between those who remained in the foggy mist of Egypt, and them whom God hath in mercy placed in the little land of Goshen, is this;

they to an uncertain, but we direct all our actions unto a most sure and certain end; they hope for somewhat in show, we somewhat in deed; they are about the delight of the sense, we in the perfect contentment of the soul looking up to those joys whither all our endeavours do jointly run, as unto the sole period of all our being; well is that state wherein nothing is wanting. Peter cried out, and we may all cry out with him, "Lord, it is good for us to be here^b." Being freed from sin, we are made the servants of God, our fruit is holiness, our reward is everlasting life^c. "Let a Christian but call to mind whereunto he is born," saith the Apostle, "or rather born anew^d;" to wit, to an inheritance immortal, and it will soon raise him up from earthly desires.

III. Will you hear what the Apostle saith, nay, what he was not able to say, concerning the excellency of the end of man; "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, heart cannot conceive the things which God hath

^b Matt. xxii. 4.

^c Rom. vi. 22.

^d 1 Pet. i. 3.

prepared for them that love Him^e.” The glorification of man is a state inexplicable, and therefore to enter into it were to wade into a bottomless sea ; faith only is the mean whereby we can approach, and see but the “ back parts,” as Moses in the cleft^f, when the glory of God passed by. “ Of things infinite,” say the philosophers, “ we cannot but infinitely conceive.”

“ It doth not yet appear,” saith St. John, “ what we shall be,” but that happy time will come when it shall appear, and then “ we shall be like unto Him^g.” “ At that day shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father^h :” a marvellous saying of Christ our Saviour, and in human sense almost incredible, that the children of God shall shine, and become as clear as the sun ; sure they shall not need the light of the sun, who shall themselves shine as the sun.

Here, we are as the clouds, some higher, some lower, all go to and fro ; there, we shall

e 1 Cor. ii. 9.

g 1 John iii. 2.

f Exod. xxxiii. 22.

h Matt. xiii. 43.

be as fixed stars in the firmament of glory ; here, we are fighting with enemies, there, we shall be triumphing without enemies ; here, striving to overcome, there, secure with victory ; here, in action, there, in contemplation ; here in the way, but there, at the end of the way.

IV. The end considered, the mean precedent unto this end remaineth to be observed. For the mean only this, religion and piety is the way leading to a Christian life : a Christian life is the gate whereby we enter into the confines of this sanctuary ; a careful consideration of our calling to the state of grace, is the porter that keeps good motions in, and also evil motions out.

For religion and piety, let the epicure propose to himself pleasure, the atheist plots and castles in the air ; the Christian hath where to rest his soul, knowing that the end of his being in the world was to serve God, and the end of serving God is to enjoy endless joys in the world to come. For it cannot be, but that he for whom the world was made,

should have some further end, more excellent than the world, for the accomplishment of which, he never ceaseth until he be there; as all natural things tend unto the centre, and when they are there they would not be removedⁱ.

V. "In which course of a Christian life," saith St. Basil, "there is a reward, a reward indeed, far above the work and exceeding the desert thereof, by reason of the magnificence of Him that rewardeth the work^k." A serious consideration hereof cannot but encourage Christians against all dangers that may occur in pursuing this reward. When king Alphonso was persuaded as stories mention, not to attempt war for fear of imminent danger, "I fear not danger," quoth he, "for who hath ever attained victory without adventuring dangers!" Distrust and fear of difficulty doth often dissuade us from the prosecuting and pursuing of this reward: if all difficulty should dismay us, then how should we attain

i Lactant. de divin. Præmi. lib. 7. cap. 10.

k S. Basil in Ps. cxiv.

our hoped end? For who hath ever attained the same end since the foundations of the world, without labour and difficulty? Christ Himself went not up into glory, but first He suffered pain.

One being asked, whether he would be Socrates or Cræsus, the one an industrious and painful philosopher, the other a man flowing in all abundance? answered; "that for this life he would be Cræsus, but for the life to come Socrates;" thereby shewing that here rich men are happy, but hereafter good men are happy; now of the two, future happiness is the better.

For the attaining of this happy end, the Christian must apply himself to observe the means precedent unto the same. When our Saviour Christ cured the blind man in the Gospel, His least touching, nay, His word only was sufficient to have restored his sight; yet to shew how He required industry, the blind man must go and wash at the pool of Siloam¹. Yea, it is observed by the learned, that our

¹ John ix. 11.

Saviour for the most part never cured any man, but He straightway enjoined him some duty; as to the lepers, "Go shew yourselves to the priest;" to another, "Give God praise;" to a third, "Sin no more." St. Paul the Apostle had received by Divine revelation, that none with him in the ship should perish^m: what then? must all be secure, and wilfully cast themselves into the sea? No, that were to have tempted their Preserver; but when the case so requireth, every one must endeavour himself to use the means ordained to save his life. We are all bound for Heaven, and we sail in this mortal life with contrary winds; sometime there is a tempest, and anon cometh a calm; the one is ready to make us doubt of God by impatience, the other to forget Him by security. Therefore four principal virtues we must ever exercise in this passage, the love of God—the hate of sin—the hope of mercy—and the fear of justice, which shall ever guide us in a right Christian course unto our end; all the way

^m Acts xxvii. 23, 24.

meditating that God is an ocean sea of infinite goodness, and that of this He first created the world ; by this He still guideth it ; by this He suffereth many injuries offered to His most sacred Name ; by this He causeth the sun to rise upon the good and evil ; by this He maketh the rain to come down upon the just and sinners ; by this He hath ordained man so many means and helps to come unto Him : and last of all, by this He would not be alone in a state of high excellency, but hath vouchsafed His creatures, men and Angels, to be partakers with Him, and in a manner consorts of His glory. Could ever man so much desire his own good, as he is now brought unto it by the goodness of his God ? “ Oh the depth of the wisdom of the riches of the mercy of God ! ”

VII. Now all this considered, who is able sufficiently to express the dignity of our Christian calling, the end whereof is so joyful ? All the labours of a religious life are no way comparable unto the excellency hereof ; our fasting, our praying, the chief matter we

are to attend, our serving God, is the best time bestowed of all. Things of the world are subject to mutability, strife, discord, envy, but the time will come, when the sheep shall no more fear the wolf; the glorification of man in the life to come is such, as he shall cry out with David, "Lord, what am I that Thou hast brought me to thisⁿ?"

VIII. Next consider we what happiness do they lose that neglect so great a price proposed unto them, for the vain pleasures and sensual delights of a sinful life! It is said of one Lysimachus, who being in battle against the Scythians, only to satisfy his appetite, and procure a little liquor to stay his thirst, gave himself over into his enemies' hands; when he was now leading away captive to perpetual misery, he then began to acknowledge in these words his own folly, "O," saith he, "for how little pleasure, what liberty, what felicity have I lost!" seeing his countrymen to return home with joy, and himself hauled along by his enemies to remain in misery.

Oh, that men would consider Lysimachus his case, and not lose their eternal liberty for some momentary and fading delights ! What a woeful case will it be to see themselves leading unto that rueful servitude, and to behold the servants of God going in triumphant manner to rejoice and to live with Him in glory ! Wherefore, leaving all allurements of this transitory life, let Christians cheerfully go forward “to the prize of the high-calling in Christ Jesus^o,” knowing that “the trial of their faith,” as St. Peter saith, “is much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, that it may be found to their praise, and the honour and glory of God, at the appearing of Jesus Christ : Whom having not seen they love ; in Whom now, although they see Him not, yet do they believe and rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorious, receiving the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls^p.” The mother of Lemuel exhorted her son not to be won with the vanities of the world^q ; for why ? he was

^o Phil. iii. 14. ^p 1 Pet. i. 7—9. ^q Prov. xxxi. 1. 9.

a man of worth. We are of worth who are reserved to so happy an end ; therefore let us resolve with Joshua, " I and my house will serve the Lord^r."

That there is an estate and condition of felicity in the life to come, none will deny, unless he deny God ; that this estate and condition is man's end, we know and cannot but know.

To conclude then, the end of a Christian life, is not as Anaxagoras dreamed of the life of man, to behold the Heavens, but to live in Heaven. " The dead in Christ shall rise : then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord^s."

r Josh. xxiv. 15. s 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.



CHAPTER IV.

That our best direction to live Christianly, is to follow the example of Christ our Saviour, Who was not only a sacrifice for sin, but also a most perfect pattern for imitation.

ALTHOUGH the chief and principal end why God sent His Son into the world, was that man might be redeemed, yet convenient was it also for man, to have proposed unto him the example of his Redeemer; "wherefore," saith Leo, "that Man, meaning Christ, ought for to be God, to bring a remedy to man fallen, and that God also ought to be Man, to propose unto man an example of living, so He was to be both God and Man." Now then our Saviour Christ; as He was God, He is the object of our faith, as Man, the instruction of our life: as He gave Himself unto the Father a sacrifice, by Whom we were redeemed, so did He exhibit Himself unto all believers an example of holiness, by whom He will be

followed : for so He pleased God by His sacrifice, and bound man unto Him in love and duty by His example. Therefore He was the sum of the Law and Gospel ; the Law teaching us what to do, the Gospel what to believe ; so in Christ both believing and doing concur in one. The scope of the Law was the avoiding of sin, and of the Gospel, a satisfaction for sin ; the Law drives us to grace, and grace enableth us to plead in Christ a satisfaction of the Law. The Law saith, “ He that sinneth shall die ; ” the Gospel saith, “ If we sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, ” and a good advocate doth often help a bad cause.

To shew, in the first place, that He was a satisfaction for sin, it is an axiom so generally received on all parts, as all Christians in a manner join hands in this, “ The Blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all our sins^a. ” This is a sure confession of faith, upon which we stay, as the house upon the foundation : Adam did eat the apple, Christ paid the price, and a dear price was it.

a 1 John i. 7.

The woman in the Apocalypse, signifying the Church, she was clothed with the sun; this clothing was the Righteousness of the Son of God. "Our righteousness," saith St. Austin, "where is it? it is His Righteousness that must do us good." "It sufficeth for my justice only," saith St. Bernard, "to have Him reconciled unto me, against Whom only I have sinned^c;" "yea," saith St. Jerome, "when we confess our sins which we cannot but do, when we remember them; our righteousness consisteth not in merit, but in mercy^d." Men may argue and toss matters to and fro, speaking this or that of merit; but come we to the touch, open the closet of the conscience, and ask what is deserved, then the case is altered. The learned in the schools may debate the question *pro et contra*, but come to their devotions, and there we find all meriting ascribed only unto mercy^e. Ask what is to be done of others, haply one thing may be answered; but ask in good earnest what they

^c S. Bern. Ep. 119. ^d S. Hierom. in Dial. cont. Pelagios.

^e Durandus lib. 2. dist. 88. quæst. 4.

think of themselves, they will tell us of another^f.

One of the greatest clerks that this age hath had, when he had long discoursed of the controversy of Justification, and therein left never a stone unturned, towards the folding up of all, hath these words, "It is more safe to forget merits, and to look only unto the mercy of God^g." So, when men have wearied themselves in matters of doubt, they find, O Holy Christ, that Thy only merits must stand them in stead; coming for a blessing, we must have our eldest Brother's garment, as Jacob had.

II. To proceed then; as Christ was a sacrifice for sin, so also was He an example of Christian-like living. When He chose first of all to redeem man, which He could have accomplished by death only, then He undertook amongst men a condition of life, that by that course of life, He might propose unto them an example of living, and that as He redeemed them from the transgression of Adam, so He

^f Thomas adver. Gent. cap. 44.

^g Card. Bellarmin. lib. v. de Just. cap. 1.

might also draw them from the manners of Adam: that being redeemed, they might learn how to adhere to God, and to live worthy of their Redeemer, and become careful not to fall into a relapse again.

Again, the perfection of the creature is to be joined with his Creator, and as much as may be to be made like unto Him. "We have carried the image of earthly Adam, let us also carry the image of the heavenly," saith the blessed Apostle. Last of all, we are promised to be like Christ in the state of glory, let us have likeness of Him in the state of grace. God we know hath given His Son to be like unto us, we must withal conceive that His will is we should in some measure be like unto Him. To bear the image of the earthly Adam, what is it but to follow him in disobedience? to bear the image of the heavenly, what is it but to have some likeness of His Holiness?

IV. And now to run a little over the whole life of the Son of God, see we every age, every action therein, so far as our capacity is

able to conceive, and we shall find it a school of instruction, a perfect rule of most perfect discipline; nowhere do we behold such a precedent of love, of humility, of patience, of chastity, and, in a word, of all virtues, as in His most holy life. Where is there true wisdom, but in the doctrine of Christ? true fortitude, but in the Passion of Christ? true clemency, but in the mercy of Christ? true humility, but in the obedience of Christ? He was made man, and walked in the world as man, that He might teach man to live, as He taught him to believe; before ever He preached in words, He preached most effectually in works. O Sacred Babe, Heaven's bliss and hell's bane, lying in the manger at Bethlehem, and brought up in a mean hostel at Nazareth! What else did he teach by all this than contempt of the world? His exile or banishment in Egypt, His being born in the days of cruel Herod; what do we hence learn, but patient suffering of persecution? By His fasting in the wilderness, austerity of life; by His conflict with the tempter, how to with-

stand temptation? Behold we the contumely offered Him of the Jews, calling Him a blasphemer, a friend of Publicans, a seducer of the people, what a lesson have we here of patience! Let us see His labours and travail in the world, His journeying from city to city, how He teacheth in the day, and is all the night praying; His chastity, Whose Virgin Mother brought forth chastity itself; His love, who ever more charitable than He Who in the pangs of death prayed for His persecutors? His obedience, was there ever greater? As an innocent Lamb “He opened not His mouth before the shearer^h,” nay, “He became obedient unto death, even unto the death of the crossⁱ.” “Yea,” saith St. Bernard, “He chose rather to lose life than obedience.”

V. Again, by His nakedness we learn how to clothe us; by His gall and vinegar how to delight us; by His wounds and piercings how to pamper us. If we speak of the world and worldly things, who less respected them than He? If we consider care of heavenly, thither

h Isaiah liii. 7.

i Phil. ii. 8.

tended all His care. If alms, where was there ever such an alms-man heard of, that gave His own body and blood to refresh the hungry? If bountifulness, Paradise itself was granted unto a sinful suitor at the very first motion. What can a Christian heart desire, which is not found with spiritual delight in the life of Christ? What virtue can he wish, but there he shall see a lively image thereof?

VI. Christ was the eye that was without moat, the white without stain, He was the Lamb without spot or blemish. The Prophets shew His innocency before He comes, and being come, the Evangelists approve the same: the chronicles of heathen men are not silent, the Roman register makes report of Jesus, "which was called of the nations the Prophet of truth, a man goodly to behold, having a reverend countenance, His stature somewhat tall, His hair after the colour of the ripe hazel nut, from His ears somewhat crisped, parting itself in the midst of the head, and waving with the wind, after the manner of the Nazarites; His forehead smooth

and plain; His face without wrinkle, mixed with moderate red; His beard somewhat copious, tender, and divided at the chin; His eyes gray, various and clear; He is in rebuking, severe; in instructing, loving and amiable, merry with gravity, He sometimes wept, but was never seen to laugh; in talk sober, and full of understanding, sparing and modest^k." Thus as ancient records have laid it down, we may behold Him according to that of the Psalmist, "Goodly to see, above all the sons of men." Outwardly, His graceful behaviour was such, while He walked in the world, that the world itself did behold Him with high reverence and admiration; yet His external feature compared with His inward graces, the external was far inferior to that hidden excellency of His.

Saul was higher than all the men of Israel by the Head^l, Christ the Head of the congregation is above all; the lights of the stars are many, but all are not comparable to the light of the sun. Holy men have a measure of

k Lentulus ad Senatum. Centur. 1.

l 1 Sam. ix. 2.

grace, but the Son of Man had grace without measure; wherefore, take the piety of Enoch, the faith of Abraham, the patience of Job, the meditation of Isaac, the chastity of Joseph, the meekness of Moses, the zeal of Phinehas, the uprightness of Samuel, the mercifulness of Tobit, the devotion of Daniel^m, and with these the wisdom of Solomon, put them all together as a cloud of witnesses, and Christ's example instead of allⁿ. Wherefore He is called, "The Holy of Holies." "In this sacred place," saith the Apostle, "was contained the golden censer, the ark of the Testament, the golden pot that contained manna, the rod of Aaron, that being dead, budded again, the wings of the Cherubims, over-shadowing the mercy-seat^o." So, in Christ is contained the ark of the Covenant between God and man; with the censer, the acceptation of the prayers of the saints; with the golden pot that contained manna, the blessed Sacrament; with Aaron's dead rod that budded again, the hope of the resurrection. The two Cherubims that looked face

^m Dan. vi. 10.

ⁿ Heb. xii. 1. 2.

^o Heb. ix. 3, 5.

to face ; the two Testaments, both looking unto one mercy-seat, to wit, Christ, whom Isaiah calleth the “ Prince of Peace^q ;” Haggai, “ the desire of the nations^r ;” Malachi, “ the Sun of Righteousness^s ;” the Angel, “ Jesus, Who shall save His people from their sins^t .”

VII. “ There was none of those beatitudes,” saith St. Austin, “ of which our Saviour spake in His first sermon upon the mount, whereof He was not only a teacher, but also a perfect and full observer, for Christ evermore lived as He taught^u .”

He exhorteth to be “ poor in spirit ;” who poorer than He, Who became, from being equal with God, far lower than the Angels, yea, “ a scorn of men,” as the Prophet speaks ? He exhorteth to “ meekness ;” who more meek than He, Who was as a sheep, not opening His mouth before the shearer ? He exhorteth to “ mourning ;” who hath mourned as He mourned, Who in the days of His flesh did offer up “ prayers and supplications, with

q Isaiah ix. 9.

r Haggai ii. 7.

s Mal. iv. 2.

t Matt. i. 21.

u S. Aug. in Ser. in mont. Matt. v.

strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him^v? He exhorteth to “hunger and thirst after righteousness;” who could hunger and thirst more than He Who gave His life for the righteousness of many? He exhorteth “to suffer persecution for righteousness sake;” Who ever suffered more, or with more patience, than did the Son of God? Last of all, He taught His disciples “to leave all for the love of Him;” but He first left all for their love, when He left His kingdom and throne in Heaven.

VIII. It is said of Cæsar, that in his greatest attempts, he used not that word of authority, *Ite*, “Go you;” but after a most loving and sociable manner he would ever say unto his soldiers, *Eamus*, “Come, let us go.” It was most true in Christ before all other, He never but led the way before His disciples in all holiness, in all trials and tribulations, in all conflicts which are wont to arise in the life of man. And therefore the Apostle willeth us to “run with patience the race set before us,

looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith ^x.”

IX. Stories relate there were in Greece certain fields called *palæstræ*, where young men exercised themselves in wrestling; in these were set up the statues of some valiant champions, that the young men that should wrestle might fix their eyes upon them, and so be encouraged to fight, as they sometimes fought, obtaining the victory: the life of a Christian is a wrestling place. We may look upon many excellent champions, but Christ is in stead of all, for what better example could ever have been given than the example of Christ? How could our pride be better suppressed than by His humility? our stubbornness better lessened than by His meekness? our vanities better expelled than by His labours? our impatiency better qualified than by His patience? “Where have we,” saith St. Bernard, “true justice but in His mercy, true fortitude but in His constancy?” “Christ was made unto us,” saith the Apostle, “wisdom, and righteousness, and

x Heb. xii. 1, 2.

sanctification, and redemption^y.” Wisdom, by instructing us ; righteousness, by absolving us from our sins ; sanctification, by giving us of His Spirit to enable us to lead sanctified lives ; and redemption, by purchasing us life by His death.

“ That we should not love gold,” saith St. Austin, “ Christ taught us to contemn gifts offered ; that we should not fear hunger, He fasted ; that we should not distrust nakedness, He forbad His disciples divers change of raiment ; that we should not be dismayed at tribulations, He endured tribulation ; that we should not fear death, He died^z.” He hath levelled and laid out the way which leadeth unto life ; yea, and is gone before us in the way like another Joseph, to provide for His brethren.

X. In the meantime, if we follow His steps, so far forth as we may, if His way be our way, His joys shall be our joys.

Him we have the guide of our journey, the Author of our health : “ That which Christ is,”

y 1 Cor. i. 30.

z S. Aug. Epist. iii. ad Julianum.

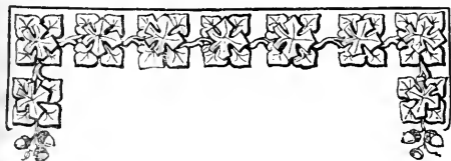
saith one, "we Christians shall be, if we follow Christ:" "wherefore, O Lord," saith St. Austin, "grant I may be Thine in love and imitation, as I am Thine by creation and redemption."

XI. The spouse in the Canticles saith, "I am black^a;" but marvel not, the Sun hath made me so: the Sun, but what Sun? the Sun of Righteousness. And how could that be? Yes, the Son of God, His labours and troubles in the world, His reproaches and suffering made Him look with a sorrowful hue; "He was wounded," saith the Prophet, "for our transgressions, and broken for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was laid upon Him^b," in our suffering He suffered with us.

What needed He to be circumcised the eighth day? What needed He fast so long in the wilderness, and pray so often as He did, who was so pure, so innocent, so powerful, but all to shew unto us an example of doing and suffering.

a Cant. i. 5.

b Isaiah liii. 5.



CHAPTER V.

That this example of Christ's life, ought ever to stand before the eyes of the minds of Christians.

THE skilful pilot, as he often casts his eye unto the stars and planets above, so is his hand also busy at the helm beneath. The Christian man between contemplation and action, faith and good works, doth the like: by faith he looks up to Christ's Deity; by good works he practiseth the virtues of His humanity; in the one he worships Him as God, in the other he beholds Him as the most absolute pattern for imitation, that ever walked amongst men.

“ Now in this case, the contemplation of the manhood of Christ our Saviour,” saith St. Bernard, “ is more sure for some sort of men, than the high contemplation of the Godhead.”

II. From the contemplation and imitation of His manhood, amongst other effects this is one; to propose unto ourselves “ a pattern for imitation.” We may perceive that our Saviour used this as a special argument to persuade His disciples to humility and love; “ I have given you an example^b.” St. Peter, speaking of His suffering, saith, “ Christ suffered, leaving us an example^c.” When the Apostle would have Christians to follow him, he tells them his meaning was, they should indeed follow Christ; “ Be ye followers of me, as I follow Christ^d.” When he cometh to exhort them to forgive one another, he would have them to think of Him who hath forgiven us all, saying; “ Forgive you one another, as Christ forgave you^e.” St. John lays down the matter plainly; “ He that remaineth in Him, ought to walk as He walked^f.”

III. Why did St. Austin say that every of Christ's actions was our instruction? and St. Ambrose wish that the wise men of the

b John xiii. 15. c 1 Pet. ii. 21. d 1 Cor. xi. 1.

e Ephes. iv. 32.

f 1 John ii. 6.

world would be wise indeed, and learn to follow Christ in lowliness of mind, that they would ever set before them His example Who is gone before us to Heaven. Therefore Gregory, amongst other high and heavenly ends of Christ's coming in the flesh, maketh this one; "The Son of God took the form of our infirmity, bare the scoffs of contumelies, the reproaches of irrision, the torments of suffering, that so God might teach man^g." To this Isidore addeth; "Christ ascended unto the cross, died and rose again the third day from the dead, to leave us a double example of suffering and rising again; of suffering, to confirm our patience; of rising, to confirm our faith^h." For the confirming of our faith, we ought to cast off all impediments to come unto Him; of Whom we may say with Jehoshaphat of old time, "When we know not what to do; O Son of God, this only is left unto us, to lift up our eyes unto Theeⁱ."

IV. For worldly pleasures, those of the best

^g S. Greg. mor.

^h Isid. lib. 10. cap. 29. de Eccles. officiis

ⁱ 2 Chron. xx. 12.

sort, if they are honest, yet they perish; if otherwise, we perish; only to follow Christ is man's chiefest good. Abimelech, the son of Jerubbaal, goeth to the men of Shechem, and thus speaketh to persuade them; "I am of your kindred, of your bone and flesh:" the men of Shechem answered, "Our hearts are moved to follow Abimelech, he is our brother^k." We have somewhat more to move us than these men had, if we remember ourselves well, and therefore may more truly say, We will follow the Lord Jesus, He is our Saviour.

V. The eagle, to learn her young ones to fly, doth oftentimes flutter over them, all to teach them to raise up themselves by little and little, and so at last to be able to take their flight and be gone^l. What do all the precepts and examples of Christ our Saviour, but hover over us, that we should learn to lift up ourselves from earthly affections, and in time ascend to heaven, whither He ascended.

The Divine Majesty might have used His

^k Judges ix. 2, 3.

^l Deut. xxxii. 11.

power, and by His only precept commanded; He might have also enforced our wills: but because that was not agreeable to human nature, of His infinite love God became Man; He took on Him the nature of man, and therein did many things for our example. The subject will follow his prince, the servant his master, the soldier his captain, the natural child desireth nothing more than to manifest the virtues of his father. "Is he then worthy to bear the name of Christ," saith St. Austin, "who doth no way endeavour the imitation of Christ's actions^m?" In that we believe in Him, we acknowledge Him our God: in that we endeavour to do that which Christ did as Man, we do that which Christian men should do.

VI. The Holy Scriptures were not therefore given us, that we should have them in books, only to read or peruse them, and so no more: but the folding up of all is, a pronouncing of them blessed that do His commandments. Far better is it with the

^m S. Aug. de vita Christiana.

Lacedæmonians to do well, than with the Athenians to speak well, or only know what belongs to well-doing.

Christ hath done His part, and conformed Himself to us; our part remains to conform ourselves unto Him. In the way of life Whom may we more safely follow than the Way itself? "Let the same mind be in you," saith the Apostle, "that was in Christⁿ:" the same, that is, in humbleness of mind, a resemblance of the same.

VII. Whence is it, that we are so soon cast down with every touch of adversity, but that we do not deeply consider Christ's constancy in suffering all kind of adversity? Whence is it that we are so easily carried away with every alluring and deceitful vanity, but in that we lightly pass over Christ's contempt of the world? "Who," saith Fulgentius, "will not despise his cottage when he seeth a Senator despise his large and spacious buildings^o?" And who contemns not earthly things, to get

n Phil. ii. 5. o Fulgen. de conv. ad Theo.

heavenly, when he sees a Consul of Rome do the same? yea, much more, what Christian man in the world will place his whole delight upon a transitory estate, when he sees the Son of God pass this life, only seeking His Father's glory in heaven?

Sure it is, that whereas our lives here are partly guided by precepts, and partly directed by examples, had we no precept in the world, the only life of our Redeemer were enough for our guide and direction in the way of godliness.

VIII. Our Saviour reasoneth with the Jews after this manner; "If you were the children of Abraham, then would you do the works of Abraham^p." He calleth Himself a Shepherd, and we are resembled unto sheep^q; now although sheep according to the philosopher be a cattle given to stray; yet, saith our Saviour, "They will hear the voice of the shepherd, and follow him also."

IX. "Awake, O Christian soul," saith St. Austin^r, "awake, and imitate the foot-

^p John viii. 39. ^q John x. 14. ^r S. August. de nat. anima.

steps of thy Lord. He teacheth thee, Who is the way, the life, and the truth; the way without erring, the truth without deceiving, the life without fading: the way by example; the truth by promise; the life by reward. Neglect not the following of so gracious a Lord. How shall the negligent be one day confounded, to see Him so careful of doing good, a thing little thought upon by them, much less practised? The voluptuous to see Him in glory, Who once lived in fasting and great austerity? The proud, in seeing Him exalted, Who refused earthly pomp? The covetous, in beholding Him Lord of heaven and earth, Who never followed the riches of this world? Merciful God! what a strange sight will this be unto them! how shall they be amazed in themselves! how often will they wish with sighs, they had walked in His ways. Dionysius the elder, when he heard of the great folly committed by his son, he calls him unto him, and reasons with him after this manner; "Didst thou ever see me do as thou doest, live as thou livest?" the same may be

said to men who follow a careless course of life. Did Christ live as you live? No verily.

X. It is read of the fox, that he never goeth by the high way and beaten path, lest he should be found by his steps; neither goeth he on directly, but now this way, now that, to confound the eyes of them that seek him. So sinners, as the fox, walk not the way of God, but have by-passages, the which lead not the right way, but to a by-end.

XI. When the mariners want in the main sea marks to direct their course by, they take their mark, which is the surest way, from the heavens. In like manner, if we had not examples, as we have many to this effect, yet the surest mark to direct our ship by, is to look to Him, Whose habitation is in heaven, which will keep us between Scylla and Charybdis all the way until we arrive at the port of Paradise.

We stand in need of a guide, for how should the blind walk, unless he have a helper to lead him? the weak and feeble stand, unless he have an assistant to stay him? the wandering

come into the way, unless he have a conductor to direct him? We are blind, weak, wandering.

XII. By the vision of St. John in the Apocalypse, where he saw the hundred and forty-four thousand singing before the throne^r, is understood the Church, and Christ the Head, and the duty of His members in following Him, in that it is mentioned, “They follow Him, whithersoever He goeth.”

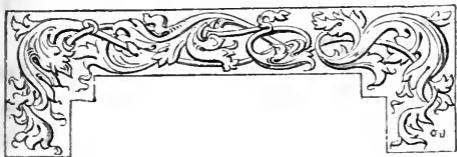
Gideon said unto all his troops and company, *quod me videtis facere, facite*; our Gideon saith the same unto all believers, “That which you see Me do, do ye^s.” They cannot go amiss whose guide is the Way; they cannot err whose director is the Truth; they cannot perish whose preserver is the Life.

If the children of Israel did learn many things of the Egyptians only because they dwelt amongst them, how much more should the faithful learn of Christ many more things, Who is said to dwell with them, and in them, Whom to follow, and Whom to know, is life eternal^t.

r Apoc. xiv. 3.

s Judges vii. 17.

t John xvii. 3.



CHAPTER VI.

The first virtue to be learned in the life of
Christ is humility.

It is observed by those who excel in the art of elocution, that they never find less to speak than when the matter is most copious whereof they should speak. Such is the enumeration of Thy virtues, O Holy Christ, which, the more we consider of them, the more we wonder at them, and the longer we labour how to express them, the less able we find ourselves how to conceive them. In these, of all other, we stand amazed O most gracious Redeemer, at Thy humility, Who being God from everlasting, wouldest take Thy passage from the throne of glory, and here arrive in a valley of tears; wouldest exile Thyself three and thirty years from Thy throne of Majesty. And what more?

wouldest be born man^a! And what more? even as the meanest among men! And what more? wouldest be circumcised according to the Law, who wert above all law^b! And what more? wouldest become a servant, and so in subjection! And what more? wouldest be as an offending servant, and so suffer, albeit in Thyself far from all offence! And what more? wouldest sustain reproaches and obloquy in the world! And what more? wouldest undergo death, yea, a most ignominious death, being the God of life! Here St. Austin crieth out, “O Son of God, whither did Thy humility descend^c?” If Thy own love drew Thee to this, it was Thy goodness; if Thy love to us, it was Thy gift.

II. Adam transgressed the law of his Maker, and not only that, but Adam, and in Adam all his posterity, for we have not sinned by imputation, not only transgressed the law of his Maker, but wilfully rebelled against the wisdom of his God; which wisdom was God

^a Matt. ii. 1.

^b Luke ii. 21.

^c S. Aug. med. sept.

the Son, the second Person in the Trinity. Adam, thou and all thy offspring, because all are accessory, shall rue this contumacy offered with so great indignity unto the Lord of heaven and earth. What saith our Jonas? "For Me is this tempest raised^b," O Father, for Me is Thy just wrath incensed, let Me be cast out into the sea; for Me hath this ire begun, by Me let it have an end. Let Me be the Lamb slain, so these Israelites may be delivered. And must that poor posterity of Adam have a return unto their lost country by blood^c? Let Me be the virginal sacrifice. And wilt thou have an offering? Let Me be the Isaac that shall go to one of the mountains of Moriah^d. Of the two goats, let Me be the scape-goat^e, sent to wander in the wilderness. O the humility, and love, and bounty of the Son of God!

III. Let us behold a little His estate and condition in the world; when He was born, where was the place of His birth? but at Beth-

^b Jonas i. 12.

^c Apoc. v. 12.

^d Gen. xxii. 2.

^e Levit. xvi. 8.

lehem^f, a little city. And where did the shepherds^g find Him? but in a sorry cottage, Him whose seat was above the Cherubims! When He chose disciples, whom did He choose but poor fishermen^h? When He walked up and down, who were His associates but Publicansⁱ, and for the most part the common people? When He would take repast, where was His table but upon the plain ground^k? What were His dainties, but bread and some few fishes? Who were His guests, but a company of feeble and hungry creatures? When He would take rest, where was His lodging, but at the stern of a ship^l? Was He not content to borrow a beast to ride on, a parlour to sup in, and a sepulchre to be buried in?

IV. Thou art deceived then, O incredulous Jew, that expectest in the promised Messiah the pomp and glory of the world; look over all the ancient prophecies that make mention

f Matt. ii. 1.

g Luke ii. 16.

h Luke v. 10.

i Luke xv. 1.

k Matt. xiv. 19.

l Matt. viii. 24.

of Him, and thou shalt find it far otherwise. The Psalmist will tell thee that He shall become "a worm, and no man." The Prophet Isaiah, "He is despised and rejected of men; He is a man full of sorrows^m." Zachariah, "Behold, the King cometh in meek mannerⁿ;" and so along. "Fear not, Herod, the loss of thy diadem, this King is born," saith Fulgentius, "not to succeed thee, but that all the world should believe on Him^o." Fear not Him to become thy successor, believe in Him, and He will be thy Saviour. He came not to possess the kingdom of others, but to give the possession of His own kingdom to all believers. He came not by arms to subdue kings, but by dying to give them all a better kingdom in the life to come. He sought not others' glory, but for our sakes forsook His own; He was hungry, and yet He fed many; He was weary, and yet He refresheth all that are heavy laden; He was dumb and opened not His mouth, and yet was the divine speech of God Himself; He was of mean' reputation

^m Isaiah liii. 3.

ⁿ Zach. ix. 9.

^o Fulg. de Epiph.

amongst men, and yet was Lord of heaven and earth.

V. If you ask, When He was? St. John saith, "In the beginning:" if you ask, What He was? he tells us, "the Word was God:" If you ask, How He came? he setteth it down in plain words; "The Word became flesh^q."

If there were no other testimonies to prove His Deity, yet this were sufficient; "Before Abraham was, I am^r." To Whom all power in heaven and earth is given^s," this same is God: but this was given unto Christ, and when He was the Lord of all, He was content to become a servant unto all. Why, suppose we, did Christ our Saviour so much practise humility? He well knew that as the beginning of all sin was by pride, so the beginning of all virtue was humility.

VI. When His coming did now approach, Zacharias was stricken dumb^t, he prophesied, as if the prophecies of old now ceased, Behold Him who is the end of them all, of all prophecies! John is more than a Prophet;

q John i. 1—5. r John viii. 58. s Matt. xxviii. 18. t Luke i. 22.

the Prophets say, He shall come ; John saith, " Behold the Lamb of God," as if, He is come. Behold Him from His cradle at Bethlehem, to His cross at Jerusalem as a mirror of humility. Now where are they that seek, and never cease seeking, for were not men happy if they could keep a mean in their music, which would make better harmony both before God and man ? Where are they, I say, that never leave seeking that mountain-like height, or superiority in the world ? Let them remember the world itself will have an end. How great, trow you, was the pride of man's heart, when God Himself must be humbled to teach Him humility ? Where is that grace that "brings low every hill, and makes plain the roughest passages^u ?" Where is our time spent in the school of Christ, whose scholars we are, since we took upon us in Baptism the name of Christians ? seeing we remember so little our Master's lesson, " Learn of Me to be humble and meek, take My yoke upon you^v."

^u Luke iii. 5.

^v Matt. xi. 29.

VII. We see the Lord of glory without glory. How lowly was He when His disciples were discoursing and debating the manner of superiority, He bringeth in amongst them a little child, setting him in the midst of them and saying; "Unless you become as little children, you are not meet for the kingdom of heaven^w;" nay, which is more, Himself is down at His Apostles' feet, washing and wiping them. What humility was this! but hence what would He have His Disciples learn? "Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am; if I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done unto you^x."

Then learn humility, dear people, "by which virtue, the Church," saith St. Bernard, "is founded;" of which virtue St. Austin thus speaketh; "If you ask what is the first step in the way of truth? I answer, humility. If you ask what is the second? I say, humility.

w Matt. xviii. 3.

x John xiii. 13-15.

If you ask, what is the third? I answer the same, humility, &c.^y” These are the steps of degrees in the Temple, whereby we descend to the knowledge of ourselves, and ascend to the knowledge of God.

Examples of humility we have many; the poor Publican humbly confessing his sins, and striking his breast, as if his repentance came from his very heart, found mercy^z. The prodigal son humbleth himself in his father's sight^a, and is received into favour with him. The Centurion was never more worthy than when he thought himself most unworthy^b. The humility of the blessed Virgin, ever a virgin, is known, blessed amongst women, to be His mother, Who was her Saviour, an ambassador comes unto her from the King of heaven, with an high message. “Hail, freely beloved^c;” how could not the mother of humility, and yet a tender virgin, but with bashful countenance, be told that she was full of grace, and that she was so highly accepted

y S. August. z Luke xviii. 13, 14. a Luke xv. 21.

b Matt. viii. 8. c Luke i. 28.

of God? How did modest shamefacedness change her colour, so often as her imagination varied; still humbly conceiving of herself? How did she at last acknowledge the goodness of God with all submission, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, with humble obedience unto that God, who had respected and regarded, as she saith in her canticle, "the humbleness of his handmaiden!" Thus we see how much humility in all these hath pleased God. St. Paul speaking of saints, he calleth himself "the least of saints," but speaking of sinners, he calleth himself "the greatest of sinners^d."

VIII. But to proceed with the humility of Christ, being born, it is said unto the shepherds that were sent to see Him, And let this be a sign unto you, you shall find the child wrapped in swathing clothes, and laid in a manger. In seeking Christ, *hoc vobis signum*, you shall find him in humility; He betook Him to a poor cottage, that He might teach us where we should sometimes see Him;

d 1 Tim. i. 15.

He was not born in the house of His parents, but in the way, to shew us that His kingdom was not of this world. *Et hoc vobis signum*, you shall find Him in humility. He became weak that we might be made strong; poor, that we might be made rich; vile, that we might be made glorious; the Son of Man! that we might be made the sons of God. And this shall be a sign unto you, you shall find Him in humility. "Upon whom," saith God, doth My Spirit rest, but upon the humble? to whom do I look, but unto these^e?" Where did the dove light? not upon the swelling waters, but cropt a branch of olive that had lain below. "I thank Thee, O Father," saith Christ our Lord, "that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast opened them to babes and sucklings^f." What are these wise and prudent, but the proud, wise in their own eyes? "What are these babes and sucklings," saith St. Austin, "but the humble and lowly^g?" Humble Moses

^e Isalah lxvi. 2. ^f Matt. xi. 25. ^g S. August. de Verb. Dom.

is made a ruler of God's people^h; humble Gideon, the least in his family, as himself confessed, was by God made the greatest governorⁱ. When Saul was lowly in his own eyes, God exalted him; but when Saul forgot God^j, then when He should have remembered him, Saul soon comes to ruin.

IX. What art thou, O man, that liftest up thyself in pride? Know, that pride cannot sit so high, but vengeance can sit above it to pull it down. "God and pride," saith St. Bernard, "cannot dwell in the same mind, which could not dwell in the same heaven; and pride fallen from heaven, ascends no more from whence it is fallen^k."

Old records make mention that in Egypt there was found the picture of Sennacherib^l, of whose pride the Scripture maketh mention, having by his picture this inscription: "Learn by me to fear God;" as if they would shew the cause and overthrow of Sennacherib's pride; as thus, Sennacherib of pride feared

h Exod. iii. 10. i Judges vi. 15. j 1 Sam. xv. 17.

k S. Bernard. in medit.

l 2 Kings xviii. 20.

not God. We are wont of all other, to call proud men and women fools, because they know neither God nor themselves; and not without cause; they often exalt themselves in their riches, in their honours, in their learning, in their beauty, and what not, as if they were not so much as beholden to God for any thing they have. Plutarch saith, that one Crates, a mean fellow, waxed so proud, and began to grow into such admiration of himself, because he had hurt Cyrus in the knee, that in the end, through very pride, he became stark mad. The church stories make mention of Arius, a priest in the church of Alexandria, "a man of a sharp wit, that of very pride he fell to fearful heresy." Let this be remembered and written in the tables of our hearts, "God resisteth the proud!"

X. The more direct the sun is over us, the lesser is the shadow; the more God's grace is over us and in us, the lesser is our shadow of pride and self love. Had we Christian hearts to consider the humility of our Redeemer, and

1 James iv. 6.

how far He was from our haughty and disdainful dispositions, it would pull down our Pharisaical humours; "I am not as this man^m," saith the Pharisee.

Let every Christian pray with St. Bernard, "Thou that givest grace to the humble, grant me Lord to be humble."

XI. The mother of Zebedee's children comes unto our Saviour, as a suitor for her sons, that they might have superiority and sit next Him in His kingdomⁿ; she as not fully illuminated, thought that Christ should bear a state in the world, sit as a King in princely authority, and therefore would take her time, and lay for promotion for her sons, but all this while she was far wide. Christ, as He never affected superiority in Himself, so did He teach it to others, that those who were greatest should be as the least, and the chiefest as he that served; for He Himself came not into this world "to be ministered unto, but to minister unto others^o." Whereunto His doctrine accorded, when He pro-

^m Luke xviii. 11.

ⁿ Matt. xx. 21.

^o Matt. xx. 28.

nounced them blessed, who were "poor in spirit^p;" His reprehension accorded, when He disliked their manner, who were wont to thrust and strive for the highest places at feasts^q and other assemblies; He that contented Himself with so mean and lowly a condition, was able with one word to have shewed as much state as ever Solomon did, when all the world in a manner did admire him; but we see how much He respected humility.

XII. Wherefore, if we will follow our heavenly Leader, then must we humble ourselves. More safe it is to be upon the pavement, where we may walk surely, than to be climbing unto the pinnacles of the temple, where and whence we may take a fall. Humility is assuredly the very honour of honour^r. St. Peter in humility and fear craveth distance from Christ, "Lord go from me, for I am a sinful man." Esther, that good woman, made a good protestation in her prayer, "God, Thou knowest I detest the sign of pride^s."

p Matt. v. 3.

q Luke xiv. 7.

r Luke xviii. 14.

s Esther xiv. 15.

“ Lord,” saith David, “ I am not high minded, I have no proud looks^t.” The Spartans, heathen men, were honoured in the world for their great humility and obedience. The counsel of the angel unto Hagar, may be counsel befitting every Christian ; “ O Hagar, go humble thyself.” It is a temptation of Satan, saith Macarius, “ thou art better than others, wiser than others, worthier than others ;” hearken not unto it^u.

XIII. When Rebecca understood it was Isaac who came walking upon the ground, down she comes from her camel and covereth herself with a veil ; she thought it unseemly, herself to be on high, and see her spouse content to go on foot below^v. When we consider how our Lord and Master was so lowly and meek, what should we else do, but be ashamed of our conceits, come down from lofty and swelling desires ; remembering that of St. James : “ Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, and He will exalt you^w.”

t Ps. cxxxii. 1. u Maca. hom. 27. v Gen. xxiv. 64.
w James iv. 7.

And again, "Humble yourselves in the sight of God^x." In the sight of God; that is, in your hearts, for God seeth our hearts, and He will exalt you in due time; here, or hereafter, exalt He will.

CHAPTER VII.

What we learn by Christ's leading into the wilderness,
His fasting and temptation there.

It cannot but add courage and comfort unto the soldier, when he seeth his captain in the forefront of the battle, to encounter and foil the enemy. Who is not animated in mind, when he reads or hears of Christ's conflict and conquest with and against the professed enemy of us all? Men are wont to read with delight, and mark with attention, the magnanimity of great champions, shewed in assaulting their enemies in war; how they have gone forth in the day of battle, and quitted themselves like men, for the saving of their lives and liberties; but what combat more delight-

ful unto the Christian man to observe, than this of our Saviour, who undertook hand to hand that Goliath, which did upbraid not only the host of Israel, but also the God of Israel^a.

II. For the better observation hereof, we are here to consider four things : first, Christ's baptism ; secondly, His departure into the wilderness ; thirdly, His fasting ; and last of all, His conflict and conquest with, and over the tempter and temptation. In the first, we call to mind our regeneration in the fountain of grace ; in the second, our departure from the vanities of the world ; in the third, the mortification of the flesh ; in the fourth, how to resist and overcome the professed enemy of our souls.

If we respect our regeneration in the fountain of grace, we look upward, where we see heaven opening, and hear a voice testifying, as of Christ, so of every faithful Christian, " This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased^b." If we respect the second, our departure from the vanities of the world, we hear that of our Saviour ; " I have chosen you

a 1 Sam. xvii. 10.

b Matt. iii. 17.

out of the world^c." If the third, that of the Apostle ; " Take no thought for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts of it^d." If the fourth, that of St. John ; " And they overcame by the blood of the Lamb^e." " Watch," saith St. Peter, " for your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour^f." Why doth the shepherd watch, but because the wolf watcheth ?

III. And to pass over our Saviour's baptism, with His departure into the wilderness, let us here take diligent heed to our Lord Jesus' blessed deeds ; for here He giveth us example of many great virtues ; namely, in that He is solitary, and fasteth. Now, as the ark of God went before the people in the wilderness^g, not only to shew them the way, but also to strike a fear and terror into the hearts of their enemies ; the same hath Christ done for us all, and what He wrought for us, He doth by His grace work in us. Having entered our names into His family, we have

c John xvii. 16. d Rom. xiii. 14. e Apoc. xii. 11.

f 1 Pet. v. 8. g Exod. xiii. 21.

the title and testimony to be His children ; having this title and testimony, we are led by His Spirit ; being led by His Spirit, we leave the world ; leaving the world, we fall to fasting, and other exercises of piety ; in these exercises of piety, the tempter will assail us ; the tempter assailing us, we “ look unto Christ,” who is gone before us, and hath subdued our enemies.

IV. By Christ’s fasting, we see how to arm and defend ourselves against this our adversary, that the flesh may be obedient unto the spirit, the spirit to grace, and so to say as David, “ I come forth unto thee in the name of my God^h.” This fasting doth very much help the soul, which is the chiefest agent in this battle, that soul and body both together, may withstand the force of the enemy. When two are combating, if one step in to assist either party, the party assisted is likeliest to prevail. Fasting helps the soul to pour out her supplications more feelingly and fervently ;

^h 1 Sam. xvii. 45.

Christ helpeth our fasting, and we are strengthened against the force of the tempter.

Physicians can tell us, than fasting, there is nothing better for the body; and divines can shew us, than religious fasting nothing is better for the soul: in this combat it is not the worst policy to weaken the enemy before we fight with him: the flesh is an enemy. For this holy exercise of fasting, it beseems none more than Christians. First, because they are men, not brute beasts, led by sensuality; and therefore those whom temperance should guide. Secondly, that amongst men they are Nazarites, set apart to serve God, who are to live not according to the flesh, but according to the Spiritⁱ, and therefore are not to pass their lives as epicures, nor stuff themselves like woolpacks, and say with the epicures, "Let us eat and drink, to-morrow we shall diej." Thirdly, for that they are men now in the field, and besieged daily with a hateful adversary, and therefore should be sober and watching unto prayer. Fourthly, for that

i Rom. viii. 1.

j 1 Cor. xv. 32.

they are men, and are to apply themselves to works of mortification^k; they fear they have abused God's creatures, therefore they often think themselves unworthy to use them, and so abstain from them. To proceed;

V. Christ fasted forty days, and was armed against the tempter; Christ fasted forty days and forty nights, whence we may gather that we must be thus armed against this enemy, as well in the days of prosperity, as nights of adversity. Who overcame the host of the Assyrians? Fasting Judith^l. Who mitigated the wrath ready to come upon a great city? Fasting Ninevites^m. Who prevailed for the preservation of the people? Fasting Mosesⁿ. Who stayed the intended destruction of many innocents? Fasting Esther^o. That thou mayest learn, O man, how necessary a thing fasting is, against the enemies bodily and ghostly, see Christ our Saviour after His baptism, led of the Spirit into the wilderness^q, where He fasted: he which brought ruin unto

k 1 Pet. v. 8.

l Judith ix.

m Jonah iii. 5.

n Exod. xvii. 11.

o Esther xiv. 2.

q Matt. iv. 1.

the state of man, began the same with eating ; but He that brought recovery unto the ruined state of Adam, began the same by fasting. He in whom we all fell, did yield by falling into temptation ; but He in whom we all rose, and being risen^r, are still preserved from falling, did raise us up by vanquishing the tempter, and temptation.

VI. When one cureth a sick man, he commands him not to do again in any case the thing that procured his sickness ; Christ hath wrought our cure, and prescribes us a diet ; “ Take heed that your hearts be not overcome with surfeiting^s,” and thus shews us what is hurtful to our health. If we tender our welfare, we must keep what He prescribes us.

The sins of Sodom amongst other were these, pride, and fulness of bread ; which fulness^t was the very fuel of foul iniquity that followed. We must be either Ninevites or Sodomites ; Ninevites, and so those that fasted and prayed that God would have mercy upon them for their sins ; or Sodomites, and so those who

r 1 Cor. xv. 22. s Luke xx. 34. t Ezekiel xvi. 49.

lived in all voluptuousness, and were consequently consumed in their sins. This is a probable rule, "The more abstinent at the table, the more continent in the chamber."

Again, Moses that was fasting saw God above in the mount^u; the people that were eating and drinking committed idolatry beneath in the valley. As fasting is a most excellent means of sharpening our devotion to God, so on the contrary satiety and fulness doth often cause us to forget Him. "They were filled," saith the Prophet, "as in their pastures, and their hearts were exalted, therefore have they forgotten Me^v."

"They who are Christ's, have crucified the flesh^w," and this crucifying of the flesh is for the soul's safety. The champion loves his buckler well, and yet for all that he cares not how it be hacked and hewed, so his body be defended. It is no matter for chastising the outward man, so the man within may be kept safe and sound.

VII. Nourish the flesh, and nourish the

^u Deut. ix. 12.

^v Hosea xiii. 6.

^w Gal. v. 24.

vices of the flesh; nourish the flesh, and give thy very enemy a weapon to hurt thee. What more seemly than a temperate man? What more unseemly than the intemperate, who is compared unto the brute beasts, the wolf, the bear, and such like? "There is not," saith the wise man, "any great hope in him that loveth banqueting."

But how abstinence is a mean to bring us to many virtues, it appeareth in those three children, who being content with pulse and water, increased in wisdom and understanding, above all the delicious wantons that were in Babylon; "and so necessary instruction," saith one, "Christ would not only teach us by words, but by example also."

VIII. What a goodly Christian art thou that disdainest fasting, and seest how the Son of God endured such hunger for thy salvation! Should that flesh fast that knew not how to rebel against the Spirit, and should not thine, that knoweth to do nothing else? But what wilt thou say, Christ fasted forty days and forty nights, therefore should I endeavour to

fast so long? A thing impossible! What logic call they this, which is a reasoning without reason, and comes from the school of carnal security? Though we fast not as Christ fasted, should we do nothing at all? Though we cannot be as strong as Samson, shall we therefore languish in infirmity? Though no meats are unclean of themselves, or if some superstitiously put a difference between time and time, meat and meat, is there no order to be observed; no obedience at all to the Church to be shewed? Is this fasting a matter only of policy, which serveth first of all to shew our sorrow for sins past; secondly, our fear of punishment to come; thirdly, which is for the castigation of the body, and in the fourth place for the humiliation of the soul?

If we respect the first of these ends, so did the people fast^x. If the second, so did the men of Nineveh fast^y. If the third, so did the Apostle fast^z. If the last, so did the Prophet fast, saying; "I have humbled myself with fasting^a." True it is, all our life should

x Judges xx. 26. y Jonah iii. 4. z 1 Cor. ix. 27. a Ps. xxxv. 13.

be a time of humiliation, yet the frailty of our nature will hardly be brought to some set time of severer cogitations; necessary it is, it should be so, lest sin get headstrong and unconquerable; again, God hath made the sea as well as the land, and a time there should be to use the creatures thereof with thanksgiving to do well.

IX. Can the world better gratify the old enemy of man, than to make light of fasting, which Tertullian calleth “a work of reverence to God^b?” Should we carelessly, besides those many precepts and examples, pass over this one example of our Saviour’s fasting, which being duly considered, doth minister much matter worthy our Christian observation? “Christ,” saith St. Ambrose, “wrought our salvation, not by prayer, but by fasting, and He fasted not to deserve grace to Himself, but for our instruction^c;” “for them that say we should not fast,” let them shew me, saith the same Father, “why Christ fasted, but that His fasting should be an example to us.”

^b Tertull. de laud. Jesu. ^c S. Ambros. tom. 3. Epist. 10.

And here fitly is the number of forty days mentioned in Christ's fasting; "because the number of the forty days," saith St. Jerome, "is oftentimes in Holy Scripture applied unto a time of penitency and affliction for our sins^d."

Upon the decreasing of the flood, after forty days Noah opened the window of the Ark^e. Forty years wandered the people in the wilderness^f. Forty days had the Ninevites to repent them of their sins^g. Forty days slept Ezekiel upon his right side^h, sorrowing for the tribe of Judah. Forty days fasted Elijahⁱ when he fled before Jezebel. Forty days fasted Moses when he received the Law upon the mount^k. Moses for the Law, Elijah for the Prophets, Christ for the Gospel; "who all communed together," saith St. Austin, "and accorded in one." Three sufficient witnesses to authorize fasting, and the number of forty days fasting, "which time," saith St. Jerome, "the Church hath

d S. Hieron. in Ezech. e Gen. viii. 6. f Joshua v. 6.

g Jonah iii. 4. h Ezek. iv. 6. i 1 Kings xix. 8.

k Exod. xxxiv. 28.

kept since the time of the Apostles themselves^k." "We have the days of Lent," saith St. Cyril, "consecrated to fasting^l." "All our life-time," saith St. Austin, "we should consider our course set before us, but chiefly in the days dedicated to abstinence^m." Wherefore considering the excellence of Christ's example, the devotion of the ancient Fathers, to both which we may well think novelty should give place, we do well in well observing the time of Lent.

X. And now come we unto the conflict itself. The tempter saith, "If Thou be the Son of God," as yet doubtful of His Deity. When he heard that a virgin had conceived and borne a Sonⁿ, then he thought He was the Son of God: but when he perceived she was espoused to Joseph, then he thought He was the son of man: when he heard the Angels make that heavenly melody at His birth^o, then he thought He was the Son of

^k S. Hieron. con. Mont. Nos secundum traditionem Apostolorum unicum observamus. ^l Quadrages. Cyril. in Luc.
^m S. Aug. Serm. 64. de Temp. in Matt. i. 20—23. ^o Luke ii. 14.

God; but when he saw the tender Babe in Bethlehem, with Mary His mother laid in a manger^p, then he thought He was the son of man: when he saw Him circumcised, then he thought there appeared a plain sign of His humanity^q; but when he heard the name of Jesus, then he began to suspect His Deity: when he saw Him baptized with the multitude, he thought sure He was the son of man^r; but when the voice came from Heaven, then he heard otherwise, to wit, that He was the Son of God^s. When he saw Him fasting so long, and not hungering, then he thought He was the Son of God: but when at the end of forty days He hungered, then he thought He was the son of man. And therefore in the first place he assays Him by eating, as man, with a conditional “*if*,” to have Him shew His power, whether He were or no the Son of God.

But our Saviour, when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He proceeded no

p Luke ii. 16.

q Luke ii. 21.

r Matt. iii. 15.

s Matt. iii. 17.

further ; “ then He hungered,” that the power of His Deity as yet might be hid, seeing that Moses and Elias, men, had aforetime fasted so long. Forty days without hunger, was not of man, and yet afterward to hunger, was not of God, and therefore the devil, as doubtful what to do, tempted Him after this manner ; “ If Thou art the Son of God,” that natural Son, and so equal to Him in power, “ command that these stones may be made bread.” There is a voice that hath testified of Thee from heaven, that Thou art the Son of God ; canst Thou live by this title or testimony ? Thy Father, either He sees not Thy distress, or He will not help Thee ; the best way is help Thyself, and look Thou to Thine own safety, while the voice is testifying, Thou art starving.

XI. In this, or the like temptation, great is the subtlety of the old serpent, wherein, first, he moves to distrust God’s Providence ; secondarily, to trust in our own power ; and, thirdly, to neglect fasting and meditation, the exercises of true piety. “ Command that these stones may be made bread,” as if He

would at once both try Him, whether He were God, as also allure Him as man.

But the tempter meeting with Christ, met with his match, for he could not gather the certainty of either. "Man," saith he, "shall not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God^t." And here we have example by our Lord Jesus to withstand the vice of gluttony, with which vice the tempter assayeth our Saviour; here we must begin, if we will overcome the tempter; first, we must labour by abstinence to have victory, or be overcome ourselves.

XII. Doth the tempter thus leave? No, he assays Him again; this man fasteth, liveth devoutly in the wilderness, is not carried away with the temptation of eating, surely He is good, and better than others! May He not be brought to affect glory? this affectation of glory is wont to move the best. Now he taketh Him to the pinnacle of the Temple, setteth Him on high; unto the Temple, a show of holiness; on high, a place of eminency;

t Deut. viii. 3.

an hundred to one, thinks he, if a show of holiness, if a place of dignity, is not a mean to tempt; and now what saith he in the second place: "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down," being the Son of God, Thou canst by Thine own power save Thyself; if not, Thou hast the ministry of Angels to save Thee; the Scripture itself saith it, "He shall give His Angels charge over Thee;" and therefore doubt not, throw Thyself down. Casting Thyself down, and the Angels saving Thee, all the world will give Thee applause, and Thou shalt be so glorious as never was any.

So we see the drift of this temptation, when the tempter cannot make men distrust in God, then it is his manner to try to make them presume of Him. When intemperance doth not take place, when a mean estate beneath doth not seduce, yet to be aloft, the tempter thinks it a fitter opportunity of prevailing.

But what doth He say? I will cast Thee down? No, but, "Cast Thyself down." This is to shew us, that Satan can hurt none, unless

any by consenting to temptation do hurt himself; for he that desireth that all might fall, can persuade, but not cast down; his property is to suggest, but our part it is to resist his suggestions: a diabolical voice truly provoketh to descend, not to ascend; the tempter saith in desperate manner, Cast thyself down; but God saith, in hope of mercy, raise thyself up.

XIII. In that he allegeth, or rather misallegeth Holy Writ, it teacheth us with the men of Berea, to try whether it be so or no^u. We see it hath been the manner of deceivers, following this old deceiver, to forge evidence, "and sometimes," saith Origen, "to play the subtle pirates, who set up lights near dangerous rocks, that the traveller repairing thither in hope of safety, may by that means be entrapped and taken of his enemies." In this fashion, perverse men, to strengthen their fancies, use also to deal, and force Scripture to the bent of their own opinions.

But consider we a little more this place of Scripture here alleged. The Psalm^v, say

^u Acts xvii. 11.

^v Ps. xci.

the ancient Fathers, concerneth God's protection of the faithful man, over whom He hath appointed the ministry of Angels. Now for Christ, Who was God from everlasting, He rather keeps the Angels, than the Angels Him, and therefore no way was it applicable unto Him: "They shall keep thee;" that is to say, thee, O faithful man, who art frail and weak in thyself, "lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone," or fall away, being stricken at the stone of offence. So in the first place the text is not rightly understood, if we respect the state of the righteous man, as the Prophet meaneth: yea, here is a contrary sense; "He shall keep thee in all thy ways;" true, but not in all thy presumptions; "He shall give His Angels charge over thee;" well, shalt thou therefore tempt God the Lord of Angels? Christ answered rather, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." In the third verse of the same Psalm, it is said; "He shall defend thee from the snare of the hunter;" and in the thirteenth verse, "Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder:" both which places concern our

preservation from the tempter, which he leaveth out, and only inserteth an imperfect sentence, which Christ soon answereth; "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God^x:" that is to say, man shall not tempt God; as for example, when God giveth a man a pair of stairs, and other means for his safety, why should he tempt God, or cast himself down headlong?

XIV. Hath the devil yet done tempting? No, he is not so soon cast off; now he taketh our blessed Saviour into an exceeding high mountain, and there sheweth Him the kingdoms of the world, with the glory of them, at once making a large promise to bestow them all, who had not authority to dispose of any one. He will give kingdoms, but upon such a condition, as should make any good dealer break off from coping with so bad a bargainer. The condition is, he must be worshipped; What! should man forsake the worship of God, and bestow that upon any but God, for riches or kingdoms themselves? these were dear riches and kingdoms indeed; "No,"

x Deut. vi. 16.

saith Balaam, " I cannot do it, if he would give me a house full of silver and gold y."

XV. Hitherto hath our Saviour shewed no sign of His Deity; the tempter takes Him to be man, and therefore tempts Him as man; in the desert, where is hunger, he tempts Him to gluttony; upon the Temple, where was the chair of Doctors, he tempts Him to vain-glory; upon the high mountain, whence worldly things are seen, he tempts Him to covetousness, which is indeed, as the Apostle saith, " idolatry;" for here he would have worship.

All in vain was it to shew Christ the glory of the world, Who beheld it no otherwise than physicians are wont to do ulcers and diseases of their patients; he offereth earthly kingdoms to Him, Who had in His own hands to bestow earthly and an heavenly; he would have worship of Him, Whom all the Angels do worship, and at Whose very sight he himself did tremble.

And here is to be noted, that by this tempt-

ation upon the mountain, thou mayest learn, that when thou art great and high, the devil setteth before thee great and high desires, and would have thee fall down that thou mayest accomplish them. "This ambition," saith St. Ambrose, "hath a domestical danger; that it may rule, it serves; that it may be honoured, it bends and bows in giving honour; while it would be above others, it becomes inferior to others.

XVI. In this temptation consider we Christ's answer unto the tempter; "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou served." And this answer Christ giveth him with authority, commanding him to depart, at which commandment the tempter leaveth Him.

Now concerning the last assault, in that our Saviour sharply rejects him, when once he begins to mention God's worship, we are taught to bear injuries offered to ourselves, but no way to tolerate injury offered unto God. "For the other temptations," saith

St. Chrysostom, “ ‘Command these stones to be made bread ;’ and, ‘ Cast Thyself down,’ Christ was not so much moved, did not rebuke the tempter ; but when he began to meddle with God’s worship, and speak of casting that away upon worldly glory, Christ sends him packing with a *vade Sathana*, ‘ Avoid Satan,’ and tells him, for worship, it was God’s, and none but God’s^z.”

XVII. Against the temptation of intemperance, we have by the example of Christ to learn these things ; first, not so much to respect the life of the body, as the life of the soul ; “ For man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Should we regard the house, and let the householder pine away in misery ? Should the servant be adorned, and the master himself become an abject ? Secondly, we learn not to yield to any persuasion of the tempter, for the necessaries of a frail, momentary, and transitory life. Thirdly, that for the want of bodily sustenance, we should not break out into im-

^z S. Chrysost. hom. in iv. Matt.

patience, but depend upon God's providence, and use the order that God hath ordained to maintain His creatures.

XVIII. Against the temptation of vain-glory, we learn not to believe the embracings of this deceitful Joab, who, when he knows any one to be given to fasting, or any other exercise of Christian piety, he would make him as the boasting Pharisee, to say with contempt, "I am not as yonder Publican, I fast twice in the week." We see also, when he hath men on high, how there he moveth them to tempt God by presumption, but we learn also in this case what to do: I am a man, and therefore can otherwise descend, than by casting down myself: I will not tempt God, and neglect the means He hath ordained for my preservation, for a little glory; His Angels guard me in my ways, not in my presumptions.

XIX. Against the temptation of desiring the greatest things in the world, I learn to prefer God's worship before all the world, and so to break off by His good grace from all

evil motions of the tempter. Against all temptations in general, I learn first by this of our Saviour, to resist temptations in the first assault, not to suffer temptations to enter the door of our heart, but to resist them without the gate at the first knock. St. Basil likeneth the tempter unto the leopard^a, which hath such natural hatred against men, that if he see but a man's picture, he is ready to fly upon it, and all to tear it. Such is the enmity of the red dragon whom Christ vanquished, if he see but a picture or resemblance of Christ in a good man, he is ready to rage against it; we see him assaulting, but not prevailing; assault he can, overcome he cannot, unless men consent.

XX. By the order of these temptations, it is manifest that the tempter first beginneth with lighter, then cometh to greater. First, he began with eating, then he goeth to the affectation of glory, and last of all, falleth to flat idolatry: in all these, Christ as we see, meeteth with the temptation in the beginning,

^a Basil. in aliquot script. loc. hom. 21.

kills the serpent in the egg, nips vice in the blade, strangles sin in the first motion. "For the old serpent," saith St. Jerome, "is slippery, and unless we keep out the head of suggestion, he will get in his body of consent, of delight, of custom, of nature, and all."

XXI. In these temptations, Christ repaireth, as we see, to a *scriptum est*, "it is written," the offensive armour He useth, is the sword of the Spirit; a special lesson for our Christian learning. If we are tempted with a desire of sinful delights, we may call to mind we have a *scriptum est* to answer this temptation, "not in chambering and wantonness^b." If we be tempted with an inordinate desire of riches, we have a *scriptum est*, "Godliness is great gain, if a man be content with that he hath^c." If we be tempted with a vain opinion of ourselves, we have a *scriptum est*, "Behold, I am but earth and ashes^d!" If we be tempted with a carelessness of our estate and condition, we have a *scriptum est*; "It is appointed

b Rom. xiii. 13. c 1 Tim. vi. 6. d Gen. xviii. 27.

for all men once to die, and after that comes judgment^e.”

Furthermore, we see Christ would not turn stones into bread, to teach us not to consent unto the tempter in any thing, no, though it have a show of good. There were many high places in Jerusalem, yet the temptation of the casting down was from the Temple, the best, the holiest estate of all.

Christ would not cast Himself down, though He might have saved Himself without the ministry of Angels; to shew us not to seek supernatural means when God doth lend us natural. We tempt Him when we seek health without a medicine, or victory without a combat. We tempt Him when we may by reason or counsel avoid some evil, and will notwithstanding explore His power; and last of all, we tempt Him when we inquire too far into His wisdom, or require that of Him unlawfully, which He is wont to offer by means.

XXII. Last of all, we see that Christ would not hearken unto the temptation of

^e Heb. ix. 27.

windy praise, whereby the tempter seeks to draw many from God and godliness; nor unto a desire of having kingdoms of the world, whereby he is wont to draw many for a great deal less, and need not be at cost to offer so much to withdraw them from God's worship. . What Christ did, we see, and hence all may learn what we should do; of this we may be sure, seeing the tempter spared not Christ, he will not spare Christians; his property it is to tempt, our part it is to withstand his temptations.

CHAPTER VIII.

What we learn by Christ's great compassion towards the distressed state of man, and His continual doing good in the world.

WHEN we enter into consideration of the great compassion of the Son of God towards the distressed state of mankind, we find it a work of unspeakable mercy. In the creation O man, God gave thee thyself; but in the redemption, God gave thee Himself. In the

creation God gave an *esse naturæ*, "a being in nature," but in the redemption, an *esse gratiæ*, "a being in grace." In the creation of all things necessary for man, only six days were passed; but in man's redemption, three and thirty years were fully expired. In the creation, "He spake few things;" in the redemption of man, "He said many things, He did many things, He suffered many things."

Adam in the state of innocency, for perfection left all his posterity far behind; his reason was uncorrupt, his understanding pure, his will obedient; he was for knowledge of heavenly matters an excellent Divine; for insight into the nature of things, a deep Philosopher; for power, he had a whole world to command; nothing which was necessary was now wanting unto him, that when he saw he had all things which he could desire in earth, he might then turn his desires towards Heaven. He hath one precept among these many blessings, that is, to keep the Law of his God; this one precept is most undutifully broken. Adam! unless Mercy step in, thy felicity and

the felicity of all thy posterity is at an end, therefore behold a helper, when thou art now in the paws of the lion; "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Here the serpent's hope is turned into a curse, and in Christ, who was to come, Adam's dread is turned into a blessing. Behold love, which affected Adam, more than Adam did affect himself!

II. Now Christ, the promised Seed and Saviour being come, He compareth Himself unto that Samaritan, who took compassion upon a poor wounded man^f. This wounded man may resemble human nature; the Priest and the Levite that passed by, signify the offerings and sacrifices of the Law; the Samaritan, Christ, who beholding him in this case with the eye of mercy, bound up his wounds, poured in the softening oil of grace, and searching wine of contrition, layeth him upon his own nature and righteousness thereof, taketh out the two Testaments, bringeth him to the holy hostel of His Church, com-

^f Luke x. 33.

mandeth His Priests to take care and charge of him, and promiseth that one day they shall find they have not lost their labour.

III. "In consideration then of man's fall," saith St. Bernard, "Mercy began to knock at the bowels of God the Father, which Mercy brought with her Peace as a companion on the one side, on the other, Truth accompanied with Justice; Truth began to approach and contradict Mercy. Between these sisters began a long controversy; Mercy saith unto God, "O God, this creature of Thine, man, would have compassion shewed him, being now so miserable as he is." "No," saith Truth and Justice, "Lord fulfil Thy word; Adam, that day thou eatest, thou shalt die;" Mercy replies, "Thou hast made me Mercy, but if Thou shew no mercy I am not;" on the contrary, Truth saith, "and I am Truth, and unless I take place, I abide not for ever."

God the Father commits the deciding of all unto God the Son, before whom Truth and Mercy speak the same things. Truth saith, "If Adam perish not, I perish;" and Mercy

saith, " If Adam be not conserved, I languish." Well, let death be good, and let both have that they desire ; let Adam die, and yet for all that let Adam have mercy and live. O admirable wisdom ! but how can death be good, seeing the death of sinners is worst of all ? Let one be found which of love may die, and yet is not subject to death. The motion seemed good, but where may any such be found ? Truth seeks about the earth and cannot find any one clean without sin, no, not an infant of one day ; Mercy goeth up to heaven, and there finds none that hath this love as to leave life for sinners ; these sisters return at the time appointed, not finding that which was required. At the last Peace calling them aside, and comforting them, saith ; " You know there is none that doeth good, no not one g ;" He that gave you this counsel, when all is done, must surely give you help. Whereat the umpire began to proceed, and calling the angel Gabriel, said ; " Go tell the daughter of Sion, Behold her King cometh^h !" Let

g Ps. xiv. 3.

h Matt. xxi. 5.

these sisters now accord in one, and let that of the Prophet be confirmed, "Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each otherⁱ;" now, Truth, thou shalt have thy right, for Adam shall die; and Mercy, here is thy desire, Adam shall be restored to life; O happy harmony!

But was there no righteous man that could make this atonement, or effect this great work? No, for the righteous shall only answer for himself. Was there no Angel that could do it? No, for they had not the same nature with man. Could not the sacrifices of the Law do it? No, burnt offerings Thou wouldest not have; it was Christ, and Christ alone, that was both all and willing. Thus much of Christ's compassion towards the state of man in general.

IV. For His continual doing good in the world, we find this testimony given of Him; "He hath done all things well^k." Look we into the Gospel, and there we shall also find that His pity was ever pardoning, His wisdom

ⁱ Ps. lxxxv. 10.

^k Mark vii. 37.

was ever teaching, His liberality was ever giving, His compassion was ever helping: and His teaching, whereunto did it tend, but to our instruction and consolation? For His sincerity of life, while He walked in the world, Tertullian¹ bids the Romans but read their own registers; there they should find mention of the faultless conversation of Jesus the Son of the Virgin Mary. "His continual doing good;" now His doing good, was in effect our good, for look what was due to His obedience, to wit, love; to His desert, to wit, reward; to His humility, to wit, honour; to His sorrow, to wit, joy; to His death, to wit, life; to His victory, to wit, triumph; all is attributed unto us. His merits became our merits, His suffering, our satisfaction: He fed many in the wilderness with material bread, and He imparted the bread of life unto whole multitudes that came to hear Him.

For curing the diseased, He was the Physician both of body and soul; for relieving those that were miserable, He was a privileged place,

¹ Tertull. in Apologet.

whereunto all might repair, as infants unto their mother's lap, where the dugs of mercy are never dry. Steadfast was He in love without change, sufficient without want, free without desert, and evermore ready to do good unto all.

V. "This is a true saying," saith the Apostle, "that Christ came into the world to save sinners;" Was this benefit restrained unto some before others? "No," saith St. John, "it was for all sinners; He is the reconciliation for our sins, and not only for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world^m." The further any good reacheth, the more noble it is; the commission of the Apostles was, "Preach glad tidingsⁿ;" as it could not be but acceptable, so was it at large also; "Preach it to all creatures, according to that of the Psalm; "Their sound went out into all lands^o."

He would "often have gathered Jerusalem, as the hen doth her chickens under her wings^p," if she would have hearkened unto

^m I John ii. 2. ⁿ Mark xvi. 15. ^o Ps. xix. 4. ^p Matt. xxiii. 37.

Him. "The sun," saith St. Chrysostom, "extendeth his beams universally to all. If any wilfully shut their eyes, and will not behold the light of the sun, is the fault in the sun? No, verily. Of this mystery, dispute he that will^q."

VI. To go on with the life of our Saviour, "He went about," saith St. Peter, "doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him^r." Yea, His goodness shewed itself towards His very enemies, for while they were seeking to slay Him, He sought to save them; He never regarded His own, but the common welfare and benefit of others. The candle being enlightened, with what carefulness did He seek the lost groat? What mountains and deserts did He wander to find, and finding, to bring home man the stray sheep, leaving the ninety and nine or companies of Angels in glory^s?

VII. By all this we learn, that we live not in the world for ourselves, but setting Christ's

q S. Chrysost. in Johan. hom. i. r Acts x. 38. s Luke xv. 4.

example before our eyes, how we ought to be helpful to others. Of all living creatures, there is none created to a more loving and sociable end than man: but amongst men, none are more ordained to do good each to other than Christian men. "While we are in the way," saith St. Austin, "let us bear one another's burden, that we may rest together at the end of the way; we are branches, not brambles to be rending and tearing one another." In artificial buildings, one stone doth bear up another; much more should the same be done in that building, "wherein," saith St. Peter, "all the faithful are as lively stones^t," Nature hath taught the beavers to help one another in swimming, and the cranes flying over the mountain Taurus, when the foremost is weary in beating the air, that the next should succeed, and so in order, every one to labour for the safety of them all. Grace doth teach us the same lesson, or rather the Author of grace; live coals will kindle the dead; the holy "gift of God's Spirit,"

t 1 Pet. ii. 5.

St. Paul tells us, “we receive it to profit withal^u.” We receive it as for our own, so also for the good of others that have interest in our graces and gifts, not by way of title, but of participation. “And nothing is good unto us,” saith St. Austin, “unless we communicate the same good to others.”

VIII. We shew Whom we resemble, when we have compassion on some, and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire^v. We know not how soon we may stand in need of God ourselves, and therefore should desire nothing more than to shew ourselves helpful unto others. It is a token we are living members, when we feel the infirmity of sore parts in the body. Christ our Saviour doth not say to His Disciples, Be ye glorious or mighty, as your heavenly Father is glorious and mighty, but “Be merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful,” It was the voice of Cain; “Am I my brother’s keeper^w?” It was the answer of those that conspired the death of the Son of God, “What is it to us? Look

u 1 Cor. xii. 7.

v Jude 23.

w Gen. iv. 9.

thou to it^x;" as if they cared for no more but themselves. It is the practice of worldlings only to respect themselves, and make no conscience, like greedy harpies, how they spoil others. In Pharaoh's dream, the lean devoured the fat, but in the course of these men, the fat devour the lean, like fishes in the sea, where the greater do eat up the less; we are often, God be merciful unto us, enemies one to another, like the Midianites. "It is a hard winter," say they, "when one wolf devours another," yet this is usual with men. "For these," saith Origen, "that punishment, Thou didst send forth Thy wrath, and the earth devoured them^z," is verified in them; Hath not the earth devoured them, which waking, do talk of earth; sleeping, dream of earth? The poor man wanteth many things, but yet greedy raking rich men lack more; the earth hath devoured them. Satan came from compassing the earth; and these are compassing of earthly things, but never think of compassing heaven.

x Matt. xxvii. 4. y Gen. xli. 4. z Origen in illud Ps.

IX. David saw a poor woman but look with a sorrowful countenance, and she needed not wait long for a day of hearing; himself cometh and demands the cause of her sorrow, saying: "Woman, what aileth thee^a?" One man resembleth another sometimes in speech, sometimes in gait and gesture, but he is most like a man that is like him in face. We may have sundry resemblances of Christ our Redeemer, but of all other he is most like Him that is like Him in mercy.

CHAPTER IX.

What we learn by Christ's little esteeming popularity and glory of the world.

LET us now call to mind a little, for our Christian instruction, how far Christ was from seeking the glory of this world, "to Whose greater glory it was," saith Origen, "that He appeared without glory; to whose strength it

^a 2 Sam. xiv. 5.

was that He came in weakness^a." When the people would have given Him the title and dignity of a king, He got away into a solitary place^b, nothing at all regarding that weather-cock blast of popular applause. "In the primitive Church," saith one, "there were so many despisers of the world, because those Christians so much looked upon the example of the Son of God, Who lived in a continual farewell of the world." He fled from a kingdom amongst men, for His kingdom was not, as Himself told Pilate, of this world^c."

II. And here we may in the first place observe, that even in this His flying from glory, glory followed Him; He was circumcised as a sinner^d, yet named a Saviour of men; lying in a manger at Bethlehem a tender babe, He was adored of grave sages^e; dying as a man, yet is He worshipped and believed on as God. After many of His miracles, He specially charged the people to

a Origen lib. 1. cont. Cels. b John vi. 15.

c John xviii. 36. d Luke ii. 21. e Matt. ii. 11.

conceal them, and yet they publish His fame, a thing He forbad them to do^f.

III. "O holy Son of God," saith one, when the candle is lightened, Why wilt Thou have it put under a bushel? Why wilt Thou not shew Thy glory unto men? Was it because Thy kingdom was not of this world? True Lord, and therefore I rejoyce to see Thee in humility." "Until the age of thirty years, we find," saith St. Bernard, "excepting only His disputing with the Doctors in the Temple, no other, but that our Saviour led a silent and a solitary life^g;" What, did He fear vain glory, Who was the Lord of glory? He feared indeed, but was it in regard of Himself? No, but for us, who were to be feared; and therefore thereby would draw us by His precept and practice from ambitious desires of glory.

IV. Although it was but seldom that our Saviour used reprehensions, yet we find that there were none whom He did more often reprove and openly rebuke, than a kind of

^f Matt. ix. 30.

^g S. Bernard. in Ser. diver.

men called Pharisees; having their name of separating themselves from other men, as being better than they, in their own conceits. These were those whom He resembled to "painted sepulchres, fair without, but foul within;" whose vizard was better than the face; all their holiness was no other than a show of holiness; their corner counterfeit praying, to be seen of men; their trumpet-blowing alms, to have a little worldly pomp and glory. Our Saviour could not away with this fashion, and commanded us the contrary^h.

V. It is a wonder to consider how we make worldly glory our chiefest jewel, how all the sheaves of the field do fall down before a conceit of preeminency. What was all that was shewed, when all the glory of the world was shewed? the word is $\delta\iota\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ ⁱ, which signifieth no other but a shadow, an opinion, a show, that which was shewed in the twinkling of an eye, shall perish in the twinkling of an eye. What is praise of men but a puff of wind which sometimes bloweth one way, and

^h Matt. vi. 1-9. ⁱ Matt. iv. 8.

sometimes another? Or as the echo, which makes a sound, but is indeed no substance? What is our vain mirth, but a little sunshine before a storm? What is worldly and secure peace, but a calm before a tempest?

If in any thing a Christian man shew himself what he is, then surely most especially in being crucified to the flesh and the world; that is to say, unto the pleasures of the one, the glory of the other. Three were crucified upon the cross together, two malefactors, and Christ in the midst; and three there are to be crucified in Christ's members, the flesh, and the world, as the two thieves; the Spirit, as Christ in the midst. The flesh is the thief upon the right hand; "They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh^k;" The world is the thief upon the left hand, according to that; "The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world^l;" which is then done, when nothing delights us, nor we take delight in any thing but in God. In the midst of these is the Spirit also crucified, according to that;

k Gal. v. 24.

l Gal. vi. 14.

“A troubled spirit is a sacrifice to God^m.” The thief on the left hand was not saved; the state of the world from whence Christ hath taken His, “that they be not condemned with the worldⁿ.” The thief on the right hand is saved, so is the crucified flesh with the Spirit, when both are remembered of Christ in His kingdom, and are with Him in Paradise, because they are crucified with Him.

“What is it,” saith St. Austin, “to be lifted up in this world, and in another world to be cast down? What, for a short time to shine in glory, and hereafter to consume in misery^o?”

“What was the cause,” saith St. Chrysostom^p, “that the house spoken of in the Gospel fell? Was it in the wind, or the tempest, or the waters? No. The text saith, “it was builded upon the sand;” the foundation was not good. To build upon hope of riches or glory, is a weak foundation, the house may

^m Ps. li. 17.

ⁿ C. xi. 32.

^o S. Aug. Ep. 111.

^p S. Chrysost. hom. 4. ad pop. Antioch.

seem goodly in fair weather, but when a storm comes, it is gone. To let riches and glory go, and to build upon the rock, "trust in God only," this is that building which will never fail, come wind, come storm, come waters, and whatsoever.

Fie upon that folly that delights more to seem unto men, than to be in truth and verity unto God. Doth not that wife displease her husband, who adorns herself to please others? the same do they who by these actions only seek to please men. A strange practice there is in the world, that goeth about to alter by laying on a little I know not what, that countenance which God hath given, only to seem so and so, to the eyes of men. Christ said of the tribute money, "Whose image is this?" The same may be said concerning some in this case, Whose visage or countenance is this?

The workman is wont to grow out of love with his work, seeing it deformed by others. How can we pray, or look up to God, when we are not of that form He hath given us; or

how can we lift up our eyes to Heaven, but think impiety shall not enter there? These think to deceive others, whereas indeed they deceive themselves, and I pray God they do not one day find it, and weep with Esau for a blessing, when it is too late.

Painters desire to make somewhat only for show, they respect not any thing within. But what is it to have a foul guest in a fair house, or a little praise and glory with men, and to lose praise and acceptation with God? St. Ambrose saith of Joseph, "he was fair in body, but fairer in mind, which is best of all^p."

IX. To glory in honour and praise of men, to glory in building, in banqueting, is frivolous. To account none worthy of honour but ourselves, to seek for ostentation's sake to excel others, is mere vanity. "Thy words," saith Phocion to a boasting companion, "are like a cypress tree, tall enough, but without fruit."

The Philosophers come unto Alexander's tomb, and every one gives his verdict; some

say, yesterday a world would not suffice, to-day seven feet in length; others say, yesterday he had friends and enemies, to-day all are equal. "Go to the sepulchres," saith St. Austin, "and there shew me a difference, if you can, amongst the bones, between the rich and poor, between the master and the servant, between the greatest senator and lowest subject?" "Lo! this is he," saith the Prophet, "that put his trust in his riches^r;" as if he would infer, you see what comes of putting trust in earthly things.

It is inferred of Herod that he gloried of an applause given to himself, "but gave not the glory to God^s." What became of this? the Holy Scripture telleth us, "he was eaten up with worms;" and Josephus also accordeth with the Holy Scripture, that his end was miserable; "but first," saith he, "there appeared an owl sitting upon his head, and after he was taken with the before-named torments; he was a little before called a god, now it

^r Ps. lii. 7.

^s Acts xii. 23.

appears he is a miserable man. What were all his physician's become^t?"

X. Christ told them that sought superiority above others, they knew not what they sought. It is true in the condition of the world, for suppose worldlings have their desires, what have they but shining miseries? The people could not in any thing more displease the Apostles, than when they would run in and were ready to sacrifice unto them. "The just man," saith Gregory, "when he is praised, is then humbled, fearing he is not unto God, as he is esteemed of with men;" when he hath done any thing amiss, he accuseth himself; if any thing well, he giveth all the praise only unto God, according to that of the Prophet; "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give the praise^u." The Prophet teacheth us to speak twice against our own praise, we are so ready to praise ourselves. "Yea, in our best actions," saith St. Ambrose, "take heed of that same thief Glory, which would steal away from us all acceptance with

^t Joseph. lib. 19, de Ant. Jud. ^u Ps. cxv. 1.

God." "If I have thought gold my strength^v." saith Job; "If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless^x; If I have said to my treasure, my trust; If I have exalted myself in riches;" by which kind of speech the holy man in effect saith, I have not done any of these things; I have not had any of these thoughts, they are far from me.

XI. Plutarch writeth, that it was the manner of vain-glorious men to have a kind of jester to sing their praises in great assemblies; but how far godly men have been from this foolishness, all that are conversant in histories know, they could not abide such jarring interludes. Moses would not be counted "the son of Pharaoh's daughter^w." St. Paul would not count himself "worthy the name of an Apostle^x." The rich man glorieth in his riches, but St. Paul "in his infirmities^y." The proud man in his glory, he "in a good conscience^z." The voluptuous man in excess, he "in content^a." All the instruments, with

v Job xxxi. 24. x Job xxxi 1. w Heb. xi. 24. x 1 Cor. xv. 9.

y 2 Cor. xii 5.

z Acts xxiii. 1.

a Phil iv. 11.

their noise, could not make the three children fall down before the idol^b, nor all the popularity in the world make good men affect vain-glory, they know both what it is, and how soon it vanisheth.

Those who from some high turret or tower, behold things far beneath under them, think them small and little, but these beneath think them great. In like manner, those whose minds are elevated to heavenly things, and have their affections on high, worldly things seem to these little, and little worth; they cannot but wonder why men beneath, or earthly minded, should so much desire them as they do, being so transitory and variable as they are.

XII. Where is Pharaoh, that gloried so much in chariots? doth not his overthrow tell boasting champions that an host is nothing, without the God of hosts? Where are the giants "that would build so high," and glory in a name? doth not God's Word tell us,

^b Dan. iii. 18.

“ they were scattered^c,” and defeated of their purpose.

Is glory then so fleeting? Then may worldlings say, farewell vain world, for as much as there is no trust in thee; thou failest them whom thou most favourest; they soonest fall, when they think themselves most sure. Farewell world, thou that quarrellest, but dost not pacify; in thee there is no joy without trouble, no peace without discord, no love without suspicion, no rest without fear, no abundance without blemish, no honour without discontent, no estate without carefulness of mind.

Farewell glory of the world, for in thy delights promises are made and never kept, in thy vineyard men labour, but are never rewarded. Farewell world, which callest the rash, valiant; the proud, seemly; the covetous, good husbands; the babbler, eloquent; the wanton, youthful. Farewell world, which deceivest all that trust in thee, which dost promise to the ambitious, honours; to the

greedy, rewards ; to the covetous, riches ; to the young, time. Farewell I say, vain-glory, which because thou art not of God, failest all.

XIII. When Gyges, a great worldling, would fain know if any man were more happy than himself, thinking him most happy which had most riches and glory, it was answered him, that one Psophidius, a poor old man of the Arcadians, who was rich with a little, and had never gone all his life time from the place where he was bred and born, but there lived peaceably, that this man was far happier than he. If heathen men could so little esteem of earthly glory, what should Christians do? Whom should they think most happy, but those who most mind the state of happiness to come?

O Christian, after the example of Christ thy Redeemer, trouble not thyself if thou see others advanced, care not for earthly glory, but care to attain heavenly!



CHAPTER X.

What we learn by Christ's continual labour and travails in the world.

THE sick man that is about to take some bitter medicine, when he sees but the physician himself begin, it makes him the more willing to receive the potion, how bitter or distasteful soever. The labours and travails of this transitory life, have no doubt, a very unpleasant taste to human palates, but seeing Christ the physician of our souls, not only took an assay thereof, but even drunk a full draught for our redemption, we should be the more willing to admit the receiving some little quantity of the same potion.

When we consider our Lord and Master, His long watchings, and how He passed whole

nights in prayer; His often journeying from place to place to instruct and teach in every city; His fasting; His suffering all along from His very infancy; from His flying into Egypt, unto His *consummatum est*; what shall we else behold in Him, but a life full of labours, travels never ended, but with loss of life! Was it not thy birth, O Christian soul, which was then to be brought forth, when our Rachel travailed unto death^c? Was it not thy cause, O Holy Church, for which our Jacob endured so many years servitude^d? He Who with one drop of blood could have redeemed a world, would notwithstanding suffer so many labours, so many travails, that no labours whatsoever might dismay us.

II. At five several times did Christ our Saviour so far proceed in labours, as there ensued the effusion of His blood; first, in His Circumcision, there He began to redeem us; secondly, in His prayer in the garden, there He shewed how He affected us; thirdly, when He was scourged, there He cured us by His

c Gen. xxxv. 18.

d Gen. xxix. 20.

stripes; fourthly, when He was fastened to the cross, there He paid the price and ransom for our sins; fifthly, when His side was opened with the spear, there was an issue made for the streams and rivers of grace: all these were done for our redemption, and remain upon record for our instruction. By the first we learn to labour in cutting off the unlawful desires of sin; by the second, to mourn with sighs and groans for our sins; by the third, to mortify the pleasures of the flesh; by the fourth, to be crucified unto the world; by the fifth, to have our hearts wounded with a daily remembrance of His unspeakable love.

III. The holy man Job suffered great trials and troubles, we think, as great may be, but for all that, Christ's were greater; for look we into His whole life, see we therein every age, go we to every place where He was conversant, nay, take we a view of His sacred Person, and therein see we every part suffering. Every age; in His infancy, how cold and hard was His cradle at Bethlehem! How busy was He with the Doctors in the Temple! To come

to further years, what hatred did He endure most undeservedly of the Jews, even hatred unto death ! Every place ; He suffered hunger in the desert, resistance in the Temple, sorrow in the garden, contumelies in the judgment hall, and crucifying itself, without the city. Every part ; His eyes suffered tears, His ears reproaches, His taste suffered gall, His head pricking of thorns, His hands the piercing of nails, His whole body is sacrificed as an offering for sin. Now there is no reason that the servant should be above the Master^d. When Jonathan's armour-bearer saw his master go up the hard and steepy rocks, he told him he would go with him^e. When we see our Jonathan go before us in travails and labours suffered for us, should we not be emboldened to endure labours, though no way answerable unto His, yet such as are agreeable with the condition of our life, seeing we are going into the land of promise, by the desert of this world ?

IV. Strange it was, that " David, a man

^d Matt. x. 25.

^e 1 Sam. xiv. 7.

after God's own heart," as the Scripture speaketh, should be so much afflicted as he was^f. Strange it was, that Daniel, "a man beloved of God," as the Angel told him, should be cast into the lions' den^g. Strange it was, I say, that these of all other should be so much in labours and travails of the world as they were. But considering that the life of man is but as the days which go before the sabbath of rest, we may the less marvel.

We see the Son of God Himself treading the wine-press alone, and a man full of labours^h, as the Prophet speaketh. We see His dearest friends in the world, His own Apostles, yea the blessed Virgin herself found this life no other but a state subject to many and great sorrows. "What should we otherwise think of it," saith one? but this, "All the life of a Christian man, according unto the Gospel, is no other but a cross and martyrdom." "This martyrdom," saith Isidore, "is two^fold; the one, in open suffering; the other,

f Ps. cxlii. 2.

g Dan. vi. 23.

h Isaiah liii. 3.

in inward or hidden virtueⁱ;" that is, in a mind always ready to suffer.

"But how is it," saith St. Austin, "that Christ calls those that labour, to refresh them? How is His yoke sweet, when He calls from rest to labour, and sends those that are at quiet to work in His vineyard?" "The rest that He gives," saith the same Father, "is spiritual; John is banished into Patmos, but John hears melody from Heaven."

V. Besides these spiritual labours, we know Adam in the time of his innocency laboured; and that God hath made nothing to be idle; that He will have no ciphers in His arithmetic, or slothful servants in His vineyard. Every thing in nature doth accomplish its end by a kind of motion; and therefore much more man of all other, who by slothfulness doth become a very burden of the earth. For in this vice of idleness, wit, understanding, and all honest endeavours, lie buried as it were, in a loathsome sepulchre, from whence ariseth the unsavoury smell of corrupt man-

ⁱ 1sid. Eli. lib. 7. ca.

ners. In that Christ our Saviour called Peter and Andrew while they were fishing, James and John while they were mending their nets, we may gather how He liked of labour, and thought them fit for a laborious profession. "Man is said to be born to labour^k," and therefore not to rest while he is here. "Man goeth forth unto his labour until the evening," saith David.

Scipio banished all the idle soldiers and unprofitable people from his camp. He found it true by experience in the course and continuance of the wars, which the Romans had with them of Carthage, that whilst they had enemies in Africa, they knew not what vices meant in Rome. The Christian man's life, as it should of all others be far from vice, so withal should it be far from this slothfulness, which is the cause of vice. It was the Apostle's rule, "If any would not labour, he should not eat^l."

VI. Now between these two, to wit, the labours of the mind and body, we see that we

^k Job v. 7.

^l 2 Thess. iii. 10.

must frame ourselves for the time of our continuance here, to be with St. Paul "in labours often." We have set our hand to the plough, and in the first place let us take care, of all other things, that God's husbandry go forward well with us, howsoever the world go. This is the difference between the labours of the righteous, and theirs who weary themselves in the way of vanity. When the Prophet speaks of trouble which the godly shall have, he speaks of deliverance, "the Lord delivereth them," saith he, "out of all^m;" but of the other he speaks after this manner, "Great miseries remain for the ungodly," and there is no mention at all made of their deliverance. When he speaks of sensual men, he saith: *Non sunt in laboribus*, what was the sequel? *Ideo superbia tenuit eos*. "They are not in the labours of other menⁿ," saith one, "but shall they not be, except they repent, one day in worse labours?"

VII. Wherefore, when the labours and sorrows of this transitory life grieve us, we

m Ps. xxxiv. 19.

n Ps. lxxiii. 5.

may think of deliverance, and of our arrival at that place where no labours and sorrows are. "The husbandman," saith St. James, "waits for the fruits of the earth," and should not we wait for the fruits of Heaven? we see merchants for gain, soldiers for triumph, do put themselves into many dangers, and yet neither doth the merchant always compass his gain, nor the soldier always triumph; but in case they do, yet are they not long to enjoy either. If the earthly soldier do this, what should the heavenly soldier do? It falleth out otherwise in our heavenly labours, the gain is certain, the triumph everlasting. "Every work," saith St. Jerome, "is made light, when the reward of the same work is thought upon."

But here is a reward so great that it cannot be measured; so precious that it cannot be valued; so permanent that no time can diminish it. Let us call to mind how sweet freedom is after a time of bondage. It is said of the faithful, that they shall sit with Abraham, and sitting presupposeth rest.

The state of happiness to come, is called in

the Revelation, "the supper of the Lamb^o." The supper, and so the last refection; after the labours of the day, then labourers take their rest. Travellers having but sorry usage at the first bait in their journey, are wont to say, Well the best is, we shall sup at another place. So when we perceive we have but sorry usage here, we may say, we shall come one day where the entertainment will be better. God knows what is fittest for passengers; labour in the way, rest at the end of the way. It was the sentence of Almighty God, the woman should have labour in the fruit of the womb, the man labour in the fruit of the earth.

VIII. Though Joseph spake a little sharply to his brethren^p, and made them for a time to travel to and fro, yet he loved them never the worse. But these travails and sorrows, will some say, are surely hurtful unto men. King Cyrus was not of that opinion, when for a punishment to the people of Sardis, he com-

^o Rev. xix. 9.

^p Gen. xlii. 7.

manded them to spend their time in gaming and feastings.

IX. To draw to a conclusion ; having given our names unto Christ, it remaineth that we look for labour ; to them assigneth He the crown, who fight the battle. When we suffer and endure travails in the world for righteousness' sake, it sheweth that we are under Christ's standard ; our watchword is, " Be constant unto the end." It makes men suffer the more patiently, when they see others suffer before them ; but most of all, Christians, who behold Christ suffering before them, and for them. Is it meet that Thy servant should live in pleasure, when Thou art full of toil and travail ? Is it fit that he should lie at ease, and Thou sweat in labours ? What reason is it then, O man, that seeing the Lord Jesus, who is so far above all earthly monarchs as the greatest lord is above his meanest servant ; is it meet that He who is not only thy Master but thy Maker should pass His time in continual travail and thou in continual ease ? Heathen men were wont to say, that the ants

who live and travail and make provision together, "and have no law," as St. Ambrose speaketh, "to command them, do shew men how to become fit members of a commonwealth." But the care indeed of holy men, who were ever watchful, provident, and industrious, doth teach us to become fit members in that Mystical Body, which is here only militant in grace, but shall one day be triumphant in glory.

Let us call to mind what was said to the laborious servant, "O thou good servant, thou hast been faithful over little, I will make thee ruler over much; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord^q."

CHAPTER XI.

What we learn by Christ's teaching the multitude, and His actions before He taught.

WHEN the Apostle St. Paul exhorteth the Corinthians "to be followers of him, as he was of Christ^a," we must think St. Paul

q Matt. xxv. 21.

a 1 Cor. xi. 1.

had a care to follow Christ, which care he would also have the Corinthians, and consequently all Christians to have. In the beholding of this pattern of the life of Christ, let us observe it well, and we shall find that His doing and saying did accord in one. Begin we with His first sermon upon the mount, we shall find therein contained whatsoever doth appertain to the perfection of a Christian life. There see the poverty which at one stroke doth cut down by the root all the solicitous desires of earthly things; there see that meekness, that doth utterly exclude all hatred and contention amongst men; there see those tears that do rebaptize the sorrowful and repentant soul; there see that hunger and thirst which doth bring everlasting satiety; there see that mercy that is ever helpful to the necessity of the distressed, and shall receive mercy from God; there see that peace, that causeth all concord and unity amongst the faithful members of Christ Jesus; last of all, there see that patience that lifteth man above the stars of heaven, to whom the misty

clouds of this inferior region, and storms here beneath are as it were under his feet. In all these Christ our Saviour speaketh comfortably, proposing in every one blessedness.

II. For His form of teaching; it was "as one that had power and authority^b" to pierce the very heart, as may appear by those words; "But I say unto you^c." He spake as one that had power to command and enjoin a duty to the heart. Who could look into the heart of man but the Maker of man? Or who could enjoin a law to men's thoughts but He which knew their thoughts, and will one day judge them? The Jews supposed that only a false oath was unlawful, Christ will not have them swear at all; "let your communication be, Yea, yea, Nay, nay^d;" whereupon St. Basil saith, "yea in speech, and yea in heart; nay in speech, and nay in heart." Being asked of the Pharisees whether "it were lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause^e," they could soon have answered Him them-

b Matt. vii. 29.

d Matt. v. 37.

c Matt. v. 28.

e Matt. xix. 7.

selves out of Moses' law, concerning the giving a bill of divorce; but our Saviour sheweth the original, that this "was permitted only by reason of the hardness of their hearts," and therefore openeth the whole matter unto His Disciples, and setteth down as it were a full determination of this doubt, "that he who putteth away his wife, except it be for fornication, and marrieth another, committeth adultery;" and St. Paul taketh it so to be without further scruple; "the woman is bound unto the man so long as the man liveth." By the law of coveting, the Jews understood the outward signs; "Thou shalt not covet, that is, thou shalt not do the signs of him that coveteth." Christ tells them there was more required in this law than so; for why? not only the outward, but also the inward man must concur in the observation of the same, and therefore the very intention of the mind was to answer the default in God's consistory. The Pharisees, they would not kill, but they made no scruple to hate their brother, even from their hearts; they would

not commit adultery, but they made no conscience, which Christians ought to do, of evil thoughts. Again, our Saviour's preaching was with power; from whence came this power? first, from a profound habit of heavenly wisdom; next, from the most sincere manner of His life, to shew unto us that good learning and godly living ought for to go together.

III. To wade deeper into His doctrine, which was all along lively, grave, and full of majesty, the Evangelists themselves do sufficiently declare and manifest as much, according to that reply of the messengers sent from the High-Priests, "Never man spake as this man speaks^f;" or that of St. Peter, "Lord, Thou hast the words of eternal life^g."

For the subject of His first doctrine, it was "Repent, and believe the Gospel^h." John the Baptist, who also prepared the way, he preacheth repentance as if repentance were the way to come to Christ. Repentance makes us find the disease, and finding the

^f John vii. 46.

^g John vi. 68.

^h Mark i. 15.

disease, we run unto the physician. Repentance makes us feel the burden, and when we feel the burden, we fly unto Him that can ease us. Repentance makes us accuse ourselves, "and if we accuse ourselves here," saith St. Austin, "Satan shall have nothing to accuse us of hereafter." John preached health, Christ brought health. John was a light, and a light is necessary before day. John was a voice, and the voice goeth before the Word, the voice vanisheth, the Word abideth for ever.

IV. As John taught repentance, so Christ also taught the same, to shew that this is a most necessary doctrine for the state of man, who by repentance should oftentimes commune with himself, debating God's cause against himself, and his own cause with the mercy of God. "A kind of death it is," saith St. Austin, "to live without repentance." Ahab thought Elijah and his prophesyings did but trouble him, as many think of the doctrine of repentance; but he found, and they shall find, it will be their

own sins that at the last shall trouble them, unless they repent.

V. But to go forward, as His doctrine in this His calling of sinners to repentance, was most peaceable, so it was also easy, plain, and perspicuous, even when He treated of the profoundest mysteries, wherein he used neither pomp nor pride of affected eloquence, yet was it ponderous, without either fear, flattery, or by discourses mixed with gall and bitterness. This plain and perspicuous manner of speech bare with it a majesty, declaring from Whom it came, manifested in that, "Do this, and thou shalt live."

He disannulled not the Law of Moses, but rather ratified the same; that, speaking of the Circumcision of the flesh, which was the sign; He, of the Circumcision of the heart, which was the thing signified. In all which there was a powerful operation, as the Disciples reasoned, "Did not our hearts burn while He opened the Scriptures^k?"

In this His teaching, He used parables, "a

^k Luke xxiv. 32.

form of instruction taken," saith St. Jerome, "from resembling one thing by another, which by a thing known, is wont to draw the hearers unto a more plain understanding of things unknown unto them, notwithstanding unto the perverse, more intricate and mystical," according to that of St. Matthew, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, but unto others in parables^l."

VI. This one thing we may withal learn for our Christian observation, that Christ's actions were every way answerable unto His doctrine; His words preached Holiness of life, His works preached the same; "He began to do and teach," saith St. Luke^m; a long way by precept, is by example oftentimes made short and easy. He fulfilled in His own person whatsoever He taught others to do, that in Him the world might have a light, both of good teaching and good following.

VII. For the application hereof, we may observe by this His teaching, first, that He was the very Prophet whom God had promised

^l Matt. xiii. 11.

^m Acts i. 1.

by Moses to raise, whom all should hear, and hearing followⁿ.

We often marvel at the Jews' hardness of heart, who, having Christ among them, coming as He ought to come, according to all the Prophets of old, their ears were so dull, they would not hear Him, their eyes so blind they would not see Him. In the next place, we may consider that Jesus Christ is the same for ever : many Christians would have been glad, if it had pleased God, to have been present with those eyewitnesses, in beholding their Redeemer ; for what a joy would it have offered the beholders of His venerable countenance, His graceful behaviour, to have heard His most gracious words and manner of exhortation, which would have made a Christian soul to dissolve itself, as it were, into tears of joy.

VIII. But hearing is not all, for when Christ said, " Blessed are they that hear^o," He had not so soon done, but there was somewhat more behind, which was an *et custodiunt*,

ⁿ Deut. xxviii. 1, 2.

^o Luke xi. 28.

that is, a keeping of those instructions that they heard; to shew that the scope of His teaching was not to have His auditors to hear only or admire, but to keep and follow; not to discourse, but to practise; for He shews that hearing, keeping, and blessing, they do go all together.

In the Law, were those clean beasts that did chew the cud only? No, they must chew the cud, and divide the hoof. Christ saith of Mary that heard the word, "Mary hath chosen the good part;" hearing is but a part. When the Prophet speaks of the testimonies of God's Law, he addeth this; "In keeping of them there is great reward^q;" he doth not say, in only hearing. The promises of salvation in Holy Scriptures are not so much laid forth to the hearers, as to the doers of the will of God their heavenly Father. It was His own practice, Who was the natural Son of God; it ought to be ours, who are the sons of God by grace, to do the will of our Father which is in Heaven.

p Levit. xi. 4, 5.

q Ps. xix. 11.

Thus, as He joined in one, doing and teaching, so should we believing and following; that so a right faith and a Christian life, which are as it were coupled together, we should in no case sever; "You know these things, happy are you if ye do them." Whatsoever we profess, we must not think to come to Heaven by doing nothing worthy of our Christian calling. "It is true," saith St. Bernard, of good works, "they are not the cause of reigning, yet are they the way to the kingdom^r." Wherefore let us walk in this way after the example of Him who hath said unto us all, "I am the Way."

CHAPTER XII.

What we learn by Christ's example in visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, and curing all that came unto Him.

WHETHER it were to behold our Saviour's miracles, as the people came^a, or to be cured of their corporal maladies, as the multitude^b,

^r S. Bernard. in Cant. ser. 22.

^a John vi. 2.

^b Luke vi. 17.

or of desire to commune with Him, as Nicodemus^c; or of an affection to see Him, of whom so great fame went abroad, as Zachæus^d; whether for these causes, or any other, so it was, that a company of people altogether came flocking after our Saviour in great abundance. As when some skilful physician repaireth to any populous city, the diseased of all other draw unto him; so came they unto Christ, who was able not only to cure their sick bodies, but even to raise to life again their sick, yea their dead souls to the life of grace; shewing that He would not the death of a sinner, that came to die for sinners.

II. Ancient and latter records make mention of an epistle sent by Lentulus the Proconsul unto the states and senate of Rome^e, in which he tells them of one Jesus, who appeared in Jewry going about doing good, and healing all of what infirmity soever they were taken.

Julian the Apostate himself confessed thus much of Him; “Indeed,” saith he, “He cured certain blind men, and recovered some

c John iii. 2.

d Luke xix. 3.

e Magdeb. cent. 1.

few that were diseased in body." Yea, Julian, and that was enough to have made thee see Him to be the Son of God, hadst thou not been obstinately blind. For was it ever heard since the beginning of the world, that any gave sight unto men born blind^w, except Christ the Redeemer of the world? The great power He shewed in healing only by His word^x, the diseases of the body, might have moved thee to believe on Him for the health and welfare of thy soul. See Him, Julian, doing such works, and if for no other cause, yet believe Him for His works' sake. The centurion had authority over his soldiers, if he said to one, Go, he goeth, to another, Come, he cometh^y; Christ's authority was as absolute over all diseases; if He said go, they departed; if come, they obeyed; but chiefly was he wont to command them to depart; and not only diseases, but even His authority was the same over the devils themselves, whom He cast out, bringing many tormented creatures into their right minds again.

w John ix. 32.

x John xiv. 11.

y Matt. viii. 9.

III. Well did our Saviour Christ compare Himself unto a physician, and so was He; for there was no disease so desperate, but He could salve it. He wrought many cures, but when He cured the soul of man, He wrought a cure indeed, for the effecting whereof He used divers kinds of medicines which He took Himself. The first, by diet, when He fasted forty days and forty nights^z. The second, by electuary, when He gave His most precious Body and Blood in His last supper^a. The third, by sweat, at His agony in the garden^b. The fourth, by plaster, when His face was spitted on by the Jews^c. The fifth, by potion, when He tasted vinegar mixed with gall^d. The sixth, by letting of blood, when His hands and feet were pierced^e; yea, when His heart-vein was stricken, His side gored with the spear. Here was a cure of all cures, which all the Galenists in the world may admire with reverence, and become His patients, Who was such a Physician of souls.

z Matt. iv. 2.

a Matt. xxvi. 26.

b Luke xxii. 44.

c Mark xv. 19.

d John xix. 29.

e John xix. 34.

A strange kind of prescription it was He enjoined some of His patients; "Behold, thou art made whole, sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee^f." This is the good diet for the time to come, which the cured must use, because the relapse is wont to prove dangerous unto death.

IV. But to consider a little further Christ's taking pity and compassion upon the miserable: when some earthly king will visit his subjects and people under him, they all by way of gratulation bring him presents, and offer the best gifts they can devise; but when the King of Heaven came to visit His people, "they bring Him in beds," saith the Evangelists, "all that were diseased^g;" those were all Christ's presents, and He took them in good part too, when they were presented unto Him. It is said of David, that all who were indebted, distressed, or of a sorrowful mind, came unto him^h. When we come unto Christ, we come unto Him, to Whom David himself

^f John v. 14.

^g Matt. ix. 2. Mark ii. 4. Luke v. 18, 19

^h 1 Sam. xxli. 2.

came when he was distressed. The blind man threw off his sorry cloak to run to Christⁱ. The centurion comes for his sick servant^k; it was a thing commendable to have a care of his servant in the time of his sickness. A man that was deaf and dumb is brought unto Him, Christ openeth his ears, looseth his tongue^l, shewing him the best use thereof, "Go, and give glory unto God." When the leper came unto Him, and said, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean^m;" Why, leper! hadst thou come near any one of the Pharisees, there was no other to be looked for of him, but away, begone leper, thou mayest not approach towards the congregation, I will in no case touch thee; leper, thou art unclean. What doth Christ? He gently stretcheth out His hand, which was liberality against the covetous, which was humility against the proud, which was pity against the envious, and, last of all, power against the incredulous.

i Mark x. 50.

k Luke vii. 6.

l Mark vii. 35.

m Mark i. 40. Matt. viii. 2.

When the physician recovers the sick, who hath the benefit, the sick party, or the physician? The centurion thought Christ's word was enough. Both how able and willing He was to do good, we may see, in that when the sick were not able to come unto Him, He went Himself to visit them, as He did to Peter's wife's motherⁿ, and the ruler's daughter^o.

V. Amongst other works of mercy, His delivering those who were possessed of devils^p, was most admirable, and none knew the benefit thereof better than those who were partakers of this benefit. The evil spirits cry out, "Jesus, Thou Son of God, what have we to do with Thee?" Sure, indeed! they had nothing to do with Christ, but Christ had to do with them, to wit, to cast them out from men into the swine. "Questionless," saith St. Austin, "unless men did live like swine, Satan could never enter into them." "There are in us," saith Cassianus^q, "many evil spirits, which

ⁿ Matt. viii. 14.

^o Matt. ix. 25.

^p Mark v. 8. Luc. viii. 29. Matt. viii. 32.

^q Cass. de spirit. iræ.

we beseech Him daily to cast out, as the spirit of pride, the spirit of fornication, and such other." Christ cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalen; and so many foul vices, as, first, pride; second, covetousness; third, luxury; fourth, envy; fifth, wrath; sixth, incontinency; seventh, sloth, doth His grace daily cast out from us, and still He is casting forth evil spirits.

VI. Another testimony of His most loving affection towards the sons of men, was His often refreshing the hungry^r; for He would not send them away without refreshing, and specially in the wilderness a place otherwise far unfit to procure food for a multitude, and therefore He said, "I have compassion^s." This He spake when the people had now far to go, and therefore without relief might have fainted by the way. By all which, the nature of the Son of God is discovered unto us, how much He tendereth man's welfare, and specially, how ready He is to be helpful to

^r Mark viii. 2.

^s Matt. xv. 32.

all distressed persons, what infirmity soever they have either of body or soul.

VII. Hence we learn, first of all to acknowledge His goodness ; secondarily, to have recourse unto Him in time of need ; and, thirdly, to be merciful unto others by His example who hath been merciful unto us. Nazianzen, in his oration *De pauper. amandis*, saith, " It may be truly said, how unlike to the Son of God are unmerciful men ! "

The Apostles of our Lord saw by His deed, and heard by His doctrine, how much He would have them respect the necessity of the miserables ; " Blessed are the merciful^t," saith He ; and if He say blessed, they are blessed indeed. It shall be said unto the alms-givers and to those naked clothers, " Come, receive the kingdom prepared for you^u." The Holy Ghost compares our deeds of charity unto seed sown ; " They that sow plentifully^v," that is, do give plentifully. Now we know that after sowing, in time comes harvest, and when the harvest

s Luke vi. 36.

t Matt. v. 7.

u Matt. xxv. 34.

v Gal. vi. 7.

comes, there are many for one, and the husbandman's sowing is recompensed; keep our seed by us, it will corrupt; cast it forth, we shall have increase. By this, there is a kind of giving which may be called gaining.

The rich man in the Gospel cared for filling his barns, the Scripture calleth him fool^w, he never cared for filling the best barns, to wit, the bellies of the poor.

“We may not think,” saith St. Chrysostom, “that as God made rich men for the profit of the poor, so also God made the poor for the profit of the rich.” “Make you friends,” saith the Scripture, “of wicked Mammon^x,” as if rich men should one day find that the poor were their best friends, when they come to be received into everlasting habitations; “for God,” saith Gregory Nyssen, “seemeth for to make them porters of Heaven.” Abraham and Lazarus, rich and poor, both together by the grace of God, and heed taken in time, shall rejoice together in the kingdom of Heaven.

w Luke xii. 20.

x Luke xvi. 9.

What more praiseworthy in a Christian man, than where God hath blessed, industry gathered, and frugality saved, there by charitable deeds of mercy, to pity the distressed case of others, seeing Christ accounteth this as done unto Himself? “When I was hungry, you fed Me^y;” if this may not move us to be charitable and shew mercy, good Lord, what may? “Whence is it,” saith Nazianzen^z, in the place before mentioned, “that we live, that we know God, that we look for another world, and joys in the same?” Who hath granted us to look up and behold the heavens, the circle of the moon, the multitude of the stars? Who hath given us the course of times and seasons; the spacious air, the showers, fruits, meats, mansions, laws; ordinances to contain us within the bonds of civil society? Who hath given us lands, hereditaments, cattle, goods, possessions? but even He who would have us merciful unto others, as Himself hath been merciful unto us. And therefore to conclude with the same Father, “O man, give

^y Matt. xxv. 35.

^z Nazianzen. de pauper. amandis.

somewhat unto man, nay, give something unto God;" then shall He say, "Whatsoever you did to these; you did it unto Me." "He hath dispersed," saith the Psalm, "and given unto the poor, his righteousness abideth for ever^a;" consider not so much what is dispersed, as see what abideth for ever. The sum is, we have heard what Christ did, here we learn what Christians ought to do.

CHAPTER XIII.

What we learn by the great meekness of our Lord Jesus, in bearing reproaches of the world, and by His peaceable conversation in the same.

IN time of distress in Egypt, the people cried to Pharaoh; Pharaoh said unto the people, "Go to Joseph, and what he saith unto you, do it^a." In our discomforts of the world, let us go unto Christ, He by His example and precepts, will shew us what we should do; by His example, for when He wrought miracles, it was said He was a sorcerer; when He cast out devils^b, "that He

^a Psalm cxii. 9.

^a Gen. xli. 55.

^b John viii. 48.

cast them out by Beelzebub, the prince of devils^c." When He sought the saving of souls, He was held a seducer^d; when He received sinners, He was a "friend of sinners^e;" and so was He indeed, for never had sinners such a friend as Christ our Saviour was. When He healed the sick, He was a "breaker of the sabbath^f;" in a word, while He was seeking to save them, they ceased not to malign Him, according to that of the Prophet; "They rendered Me evil for good, and hatred for My good-will^g," and yet He was patient. So then we must learn by His example, how to bear the contumelies of this world with a calm and quiet mind. We must learn it also by His precepts, Who willed His Disciples "to learn of Him to be humble and meek^h," Who pronounceth them blessed, "that endured to be reviled, and to be spoken evil of for His Name's sakeⁱ," and prescribeth a sovereign medicine against all adversities in-

c Matt. xii. 24. b Luke xxiii. 14. e Matt. xi. 19.

f John v. 16.

g Ps. xxxv. 12.

h Matt. xi. 29.

i Matt. v. 11.

cident to the life of man, saying, "In your patience possess your souls^k."

In going over the life of the Son of God, what else do we find it but a life of continual suffering, and not only that, but of mild suffering? "For He was," saith the Prophet Isaiah, "yea, as a lamb before the shearer, as a lamb that opened not his mouth before the shearer^l." For behold we Him in His Passion, there shall we find His eyes full of tears, His mouth full of gall, His ears full of contumelies, His head full of thorns, His heart full of sorrows, and amidst all, Himself praying for His persecutors. At this time He is derided, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save;" nay, had He saved Himself, He had not saved others, and because He would save others, He would not save Himself. Again, they said unto Him, "Come down from the cross, if Thou be the Son of God;" "whence," saith St. Gregory, "if Christ, when He was reproached, had come down from the cross, giving place to those that insulted over Him,

k Luke xxi. 19.

l Isai. liii. 7.

where had the virtue of patience been?" We see He expecteth awhile, suffereth reproaches and derisions that were offered Him, and He that would not come down from the cross, rose up from the sepulchre; and that was a greater matter to rise from the sepulchre, than to come down from the cross, to destroy death by rising, than to save life by descending. Of Whose patience, St. Cyprian saith, "Oh, how mildly did He give place to His persecutors! How quietly bare He reproaches offered! He was crowned with thorns, to crown Martyrs with glory! He was fed with gall, to give us manna from Heaven! He was laden with reproaches, to free us from blame^m!"

We read in St. Luke, that when His Disciples would have had Him call for fire from Heaven, as Elias didⁿ, He answered them meekly, "You know not of what spirit you are," whether of that in the Law, which required severity, or of this of the Gospel, which would have mercy. And in the Gospel by St. John, that albeit the people were a little

^m Cyprian. de bona patient.

ⁿ Luke ix. 54.

before ready to stone Him^o, yet again, by and by, He goes to teach and instruct them, as if He had clean forgot all the wrong they did intend against Him.

If ever we call our best attention to observe, then let us do it in observing the patience of Christ, in bearing the reproaches of this world; to suffer, we must be content, it was His case that now sits at the right hand of God in Heaven. "Patience," saith St. Ambrose, "it is like Rebecca, who willed Jacob to endure a little his brother's wrath; when the storm is blown over, all will be well."

Many examples we have, saith St. James, of suffering; "take," saith he, "the prophets for an example^p." Though Moses did often entreat for the people, yet the people did sting him with their tongues^q. What came of it? The people a little after were stung with the "tongues of fiery serpents." Joseph, saith St. Ambrose, had two great troubles at once, the one of temptation, the other of calumination; the temptation he overcame, the ca-

^o John xi. 8.

^p James v. 10.

^q Numb. xxi. 5.

lumination did awhile stick by him, until his cause was known, and then his disgrace was turned into glory. David had many hard words when Shimei did curse him ; David bears all, and bethinks himself if this were not a chastisement sent from God.

Fulgentius, a reverend prelate, being much injured by certain Arians, when he was advised to convent those malicious men before the magistrate, No, saith he, I refer my cause to another tribunal. Tertullian sheweth how the Christians bare with admirable patience all reproaches : and, St. Cyprian saith, that they made their prayers, that those who did persecute them here for a time, might at last come to the knowledge of God, and so rejoice with them hereafter.

Thus after the example of the Son of God, and of all the servants of God in all ages, we learn patiently to endure the hard usage of this world.

In our injuries let us evermore call to mind that our Lord and Saviour took on Him our miseries, and endured injuries, Who from the

hour of His birth until His death was not free from suffering grief. For benefits He received ingratitude; oh, how are we bound unto Him for shewing us the way of suffering unto this heavenly kingdom!

Though the seas rage, and the waves beat against the rock, they hurt not the rock, but are themselves turned into froth. Mention is made by those who write the natures of things, that the herb Dyanton, though you throw water never so oft upon it, you shall notwithstanding ever find it dry. The waters of tribulation may be poured out upon the patient, for all that they are evermore the same, faithful, constant. A Christian being asked what fruit he had by Christ, Is not this fruit, said he, not to be moved at your reproaches? this he spake to his calumniators. In cases of this nature, we must refer all to God. If thou hold thy peace God speaks for thee; and if God speaks for thee, it is better than thou canst speak for thyself. David saith, "I held my peace, for it was Thy doing^r."

God remove envy from the minds of Christians! for it is a diabolical vice and sendeth forth its arrows, even bitter words; but patience is like a privy coat, that makes these arrows recoil, and even to hurt those who did intend hurt to others, which are the envious. The Prophet David likens these to the asp, a beast that is but ill sighted, yet quick of hearing; weak, yet full of poison: wherefore, as I said, God remove envy from Christians: the godly are amongst the envious, as Lot amongst the Sodomites, as Sampson amongst the Philistines.

Trees well rooted endure all storms; the fortress may be assaulted, but not won or yielded over: constant minds have many trials, but they are armed to endure all. A good conscience at home, saith St. Ambrose, is not much moved at unjust contumelies abroad: by the same fire the gold is purified and the dross rejected; by the same wind the good grain is cleansed and the chaff is scattered: by the same sun the clay is stiffened and the wax melted: by the same affliction the dis-

solute are hardened and the godly more instructed.

We cannot give better proof how we have profited in the school of Christ, than by shewing to men Whose scholars we are in taking all patiently. The three children walked up and down in the fiery flames^s praising God. The refuge of the righteous man is, "Lord, whom have I in Heaven but Thee^t?" Truth, saith Tertullian, is a stranger on earth, where it hath many enemies and but few friends. Jacob, blessing the sons of Joseph, he blessed them with a cross: the greatest blessing that ever came unto the world came by a cross, and there is no blessing in the world without a cross; I mean some adversity of this life. When the master of the house is called Beelzebub, why complainest thou? Let God be God, and do as beseems Him best in bringing us into His kingdom.

Last of all, consider the peaceable conversation of Christ in this world: art thou mocked? So was He of Herod's men of war.

s Dan. iii. 25.

t Psalm lxxiii. 25.

Art thou reviled? So was He of the Jews. Do false witnesses arise against thee? So did they against Him. Art thou betrayed? So was He by one of His own Disciples, and steward of His temporalities. In all these it was said, "Learn of Me to be humble and meek^u." Zechariah saith, speaking of the manner of Christ His coming, "Behold, the King cometh in meek manner^v." When the blessed Virgin began to expostulate with Him for losing Himself, as she thought, He mildly answered, "that He must go about His Father's business." When His Apostle, St. Peter, drew out his sword and struck off the ear of the High Priest's servant, his mild Master, parting the fray, saith unto him, "Put up thy sword into thy sheath." In His last supper, when He was solicited to name him that should betray Him, He would not name him, for had He named him, saith Austin, it is very likely Peter would have torn him with his teeth. Merciful Lord, how mild a demeanour was this! His Apostles

^u Matt. xi. 29.

^v Zech. ix. 9.

hearing Him tell of His departure from them, waxed sorrowful^x, and surely well might they be sorrowful, in respect of the benefit they enjoyed by His Presence: for if at any time they were fearful, He strengthened them; if ignorant, He instructed them; if moved to choler, He appeased them. So He governed them as a Father, instructed them as a Master, counselled them as a Friend, and in all He shewed them a pattern of mildness, and of a most peaceable conversation, insomuch, that when it was said of Him, “He receiveth sinners^y,” Christ denied it not, but approves the deed by three parables, and that it was the end of His coming to call sinners to repentance.

By all this we see how much it concerneth us who of Christ are called Christians, to study to be quiet, and if it be possible, as much as in us lieth, to live peaceably with all men; which God of His mercy grant us all grace to do, by the example of Christ Jesus, and the blessed assistance of Christ Jesus. So be it. Amen.

x John xiv. 1, 2.

y Luke xiv. 1, 2.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of the name of Jesus.

JESUS is in Hebrew interpreted Saviour; a name, saith Eusebius^z, had in much honour amongst the old patriarchs, and now attributed unto the Son of God: a name brought from Heaven by the angel Gabriel^a: "Thou shalt be called by a name which the mouth of God shall give^b:" and well might it come from Heaven from whence all blessedness comes. Though in the old Law, others had the appellation of this name, as Joshua the son of Nun^c, and Joshua the High Priest^d, which came forth with the people after their captivity, yet had these their names no way comparable to this of our Lord and Saviour; for they were only saviours of the body, but Christ was a Saviour of souls. For those others to whom this name was given, they had it of men, at the time of their Circum-

z Lib. I. cap. 1.

a Matt. i. 21.

b Isai. lxii. 2.

c Josh. i. 1.

d Zech. iii. 1.

cision, this was given of God before the conception; in their names was included the saving of a multitude of people from some worldly servitude; but in this, of saving His believing people from their sins; "And thou shalt call His name Jesus^e;" wherein is expressed the imposition and the reason of His name: in the reason these four things are to be observed: 1. *Author operis, Ipse*, "He:" 2. *Opus salvabit*, "He shall save:" 3. *Conditio salvandorum*, "His people:" 4. *Modus salvandi*, "the manner of saving; a saving from their sins." "And thou shalt call His name Jesus;" O sweet name, who is so deaf that at the hearing of this name, his ears are not filled with joy? Who so dead, that hath not his senses raised up with delight when he remembereth the message of the Angel, "and thou shalt call His name Jesus!"

"This name Jesus," saith St. Bernard^f, "it is honey in the mouth, harmony in the ear, melody in the heart." "This name Jesus," saith Anselm, "is a name of comforting sin-

^e Matt. i. 21.

^f In can. serm. xv.

ners when they call upon Him, therefore he himself saith, "Jesus be my Jesus." This name is above all names; first, for that it was consecrated from everlasting; secondly, for that it was given of God; thirdly, for that it was desired of the Patriarchs; fourthly, for that it was foretold of the Prophets; fifthly, for that it was accomplished in the time of grace; magnified of the Apostles, witnessed of the Martyrs, acknowledged and honoured shall it be of all believers unto the world's end."

This name Jesus, it is compared unto "oil poured out," oil being kept close, it sendeth not forth such an odoriferous savour as it doth being poured out; and oil hath these properties, it suppleth, it cherisheth, it enlighteneth, it maketh look cheerfully, it will be ever above; so doth this name of Jesus, it suppleth the hardness of our hearts, it cherisheth the weakness of our faith, it enlighteneth the darkness of the soul, dispersing the foggy mists of discomfort, and it maketh man look with a cheerful countenance towards the throne of

grace ; it is above all names. Last of all, it is not only compared to an ointment, but to an ointment “ poured out^h :” as if before, mercy came from God by drops ; but since this name was given, mercy is poured out in abundance.

Our Lord in Holy Scripture hath many divine resemblances in names to express His nature ; sometimes He is called a Shepherd, for that He watcheth His flock ; sometimes a Captain, because He defendeth His army ; a Prince in that He governeth His people ; Light, because He illuminateth those that are in darkness ; a Door, by which men do enter ; a Rock, upon which they do build ; but in brief, this name Jesus includes all ; for in this He shews not so much what He is in Himself, as what He is to us, seeing He vouchsafeth to carry our benefit in His name.

II. This name Jesus is a name of intercession ; “ Whatsoever you ask the Father in My nameⁱ :” and therefore may that of the Prophet be remembered ; “ Not unto us, Lord,

^h Can. i. 3.

ⁱ John xiv. 13.

not unto us, but unto Thy name give the praise^k." God did so much for Abraham's, for Moses' and David's sake, what shall He do for Jesus' sake? This name Jesus is a name of power, for in this name the Apostles gave strength unto the weak, health unto the sick, and wrought many other great miracles. "Lord, how wonderful is Thy name in all the world^l!"

This name Jesus is a name of invocation, not only in a time of distress, while we are living, to say with the blind man, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy upon me^m;" but with the blessed Martyr, St. Stephen, in our last extremities when we are dying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spiritⁿ!"

Last of all; this name Jesus is a name of remission of sins; "your sins are forgiven for His name's sake," saith St. John^o; now He will be as good as His name and to save you from your sins. The Prophet David, in his distress he maketh this prayer to God,

k Psalm cxv. 1.

l Psalm viii. 1.

m Luke xviii. 38.

n Acts vii. 59.

o 1 Ep. ii. 12.

“say unto my soul, I am thy salvation^p!” as if he should have said, Lord, thou hast many names of power and greatness, once take a name of mercy and goodness, “say unto my soul, I am thy Jesus, that is, I am thy salvation.”

III. But how is it that at the hearing of other names of God, as “Elohim, Elohi, El, Eloi, Elion, Jehovah, Ja, Adonai, Shaddai, El-Sabaoth,” which signify His essence, power, omnipotency, we are not so much moved? And “at this name Jesus,” the Apostle saith, “every knee shall bow,” not only the knees of our heart, which at this name should bow and bend indeed, but every knee! He that created the body should have reverence of the body: the Apostle goeth further, saying, “of things both in Heaven and earth, and under the earth^q;” but why at this name of God above all other? Because this name cost much, when it was bought by the blood, by the honour, by the life of the Son of God Himself; and it was written upon the cross

^p Psalm xxxv. 3.

^q Phil. ii. 10.

over His head, Jesus, as the cause of His death and Passion, because He was a Saviour. Now seeing it cost such a price, we ought with all reverence to be thankful for it; He humbled Himself in procuring it, and we therefore in receiving it. Jesus, a Saviour, therefore God: Christ anointed, and so the Holy One of God. Jesus in Hebrew for the Jews, Christ in Greek for the Gentiles: Jesus to save sinners, and Christ in respect of us all to kill sin, saith Bonaventura. It is the property of a Saviour, first, to encounter with the enemy; secondly, to help with counsel; thirdly, to give strength; fourthly, not to save once but still; fifthly, not one, but many; sixthly, not for a time, but for ever; all which our Lord Jesus fully accomplished.

And sure, most convenient was it, that He who came to save sinners, should have a name answerable thereunto. For names, saith Isidore^r, were given of old according unto the properties of the person named. And therefore Abraham was so named, because he

^r Etym. lib. vii. cap. 7.

should be the father of many nations. Esau, rough, because such were his manners, actions, and conditions. Ahishar, brother of mourning, because such were his passions. Aristarchus, a right and good governor, who was companion to St. Paul. So to omit many other, we see names were often given to express the principal properties of those who were named; and therefore this name Jesus is a name of saving; of which the Apostle saith, "there is no other name given under Heaven whereby we may be saved^r." The blind man in the Gospel said, "the man that is called Jesus^s." Thinking Him to be a man only, therein he was blind indeed. Festus saith, "one Jesus^t," yea, Festus, this one Jesus was He that lives and reigns for ever in glory.

St. Luke saith, "and they Circumcised the Child the eighth day, and called His name Jesus^u." The Child! what humility was here when so high a Lord accepted so small a

r Acts iv. 12.

t Acts xxv. 19.

s John ix. 11.

u Luke ii. 21.

name! "They called His name," not gave Him His name: it is of God, not of man; let God be revered, let man tremble at it. Our Saviour's name is Jesus, a name that came from Heaven, and well from Heaven, from whence comes all goodness.

IV. In the old Law, Jesus was the expectation of nations, but in the new, Jesus is the salvation of the nations. If at any time we have lost Jesus, what should we but with Mary and Joseph seek Him sorrowing? "O sweet Saviour," saith St. Bernard, "if Thou wert not found amongst Thine own kindred, how should I look to find Thee amongst my kindred! Or if Thine own mother found Thee not but after sorrowing for Thee, how shall I rejoice except I find Thee?" But how should we seek Him? When Jesus is present, all is well, nothing seemeth difficult; but when Jesus is absent, all is hard and uneasy. When Jesus speaketh not inwardly, vile is all our consolation, but when Jesus speaks one word only, there is felt great comfort. Did not Mary Magdalen straight arise from the place

whereon she wept, when Martha said unto her, "The Master calleth for thee?" Happy honour, when Jesus calleth from tears to joy. How dry and hard art thou without Jesus! How foolish and vain if thou covetest any thing without Jesus! Is not this greater loss than if thou hadst lost the whole world? What can the world bestow without Jesus? To be without Jesus is a grievous hell, and to be with Jesus is a sweet paradise. If Jesus be with thee no enemy can hurt thee; if Jesus be from thee, no friend can help; he is most poor that liveth without Jesus, and he is most rich who is with Jesus.

There is great art to know how to be conversant with Jesus, and wisdom to learn how to possess Him; be humble and at peace, and Jesus will be with thee; be devout and quiet, and Jesus will not depart from thee; thou mayest drive Jesus away, and lose His grace, if thou decline to external things; and if thou hast lost Him, to whom wilt thou fly? What friend wilt thou seek? Without a friend thou canst not long continue; and if Jesus be not

thy friend, thou wilt be heavy and desolate. Thou dost therefore foolishly, if thou repose or rejoice in any other; thou oughtest rather to have the world thine enemy than to offend Christ Jesus; wherefore, of all things dear unto thee, let Jesus be especially beloved. All things for Jesus, and Jesus for Himself; for Him, and in Him, let all be alike unto thee. See thou never desire to be praised or loved singularly; neither let another possess thee, or dwell in thine heart, for this appertaineth only to Jesus. Be pure, and at inward liberty without the implicatures of the world, if thou wilt bare thy heart to Jesus and see how sweet the Lord is.

V. Finally, thou oughtest not to be cast down by any adversity, but patiently to endure all that shall happen, remembering this happy name Jesus, to which thou mayest fly as to a city of refuge^x. Jesus is the joy of us Christians; He was born for us, given to us; He was the price of our ransom, and therefore our Redeemer; He was the Author of our being,

x Deut. iv. 42.

and therefore " whatsoever we do," saith the Apostle, " let us do all in the name of the Lord Jesusy." *In nomine Jesu*, must be the beginning ; *In auxilio Jesu*, must be the prosecuting ; *In laudem Jesu*, must be the concluding.

CHAPTER XV.

What we learn by Jesus Christ His teaching His Disciples to pray, and of that Divine form of prayer He taught them.

THREE principal exercises there are of Christian piety before all other ; alms, fasting, and prayer. These we use as medicines to cure evils past, to drive away those that are present, and to prevent such as are to come. Alms and fasting, as two wings, carry our prayers upward ; if our prayers soar upward, God's mercies come down. Jacob saw

Angels ascending and descending, but none standing still, saith St. Bernard. Our prayers, like ascending Angels, go up to God; God's mercies, like descending Angels, come down to us.

II. Wonderful was the providence of Almighty God, in ordering all things that did appertain unto the tabernacle of old^z. There was not any particular thing about it, but an express form was set down, how and after what manner it must be done. Now we have not a material ark or tabernacle, for these were shadows of things to come, but we have a form of worshipping God which is more excellent, with all things appertaining to this worship. Christ our Saviour hath set all in order about this tabernacle, and first of all concerning our sacrifice of Prayer; this He layeth down with many circumstances, as by the prayer of the Publican, teaching to pray with humility^a; by the parable of the widow, to pray with importunity^b; by His commendation of the woman of Canaan, to

^z Exod. xxv. 3.

^a Luke xviii. 13.

^b Matt. xv. 28.

pray with fervency ; by His disliking the Pharisees for their desire to be seen praying, to pray secretly in our chambers^b and other such like directions for prayer ; whereby we may see that our devotion is no by-matter whereabout the Son of God is so often instructing us.

The Disciples of our Saviour seeing Him their Master oftentimes to pray, they presently conceived within themselves, doubtless prayer is a matter of great importance, otherwise our Master would never pray so oft as He doth, wherefore they do come unto Him, making request unto Him “to teach them to pray^c.”

III. Now Christ at this time teacheth His Disciples a form of prayer ; “When you pray,” saith He, “pray after this manner : Our Father,” &c. Surely a most Divine form of prayer, above all other in the world, and so much the more excellent, by how much the more the Author thereof is above men and Angels. St. Austin calleth it a prayer of

^b Matt. vi. 6.

^c Luke xi. 2, 3.

prayers^d. Tertullian, a breviary of our faith^e. “O, what prayer,” saith St. Cyprian, “is more gracious with the Father, than that which is delivered unto us of the Son^f.” And how comfortably may we pray unto God, when we do not only use His name to countenance our suits, but even His own words! And here we may observe, that Christ setteth down a prescript form of prayer, to shew unto us that all our prayers should not run upon indigested words and senseless tautologies, as many unwisely have dreamed of, voluntary extemporal praying, which doth much detract from this excellent part of God’s worship.

In the book of Numbers, Almighty God laid down unto the Priests a direct form how to “bless the people^g.” In Joel, the very words are mentioned which penitent sinners should use^h in their conversion to God, “Be favourable, O Lord,” &c. and here Christ we see prescribes a form of prayer, which for

^d Aug. Serm. post Pente.

^e Tertull. in Orat. Dom.

^f Cypr. in Orat. Dom.

^g Num. vi. 24, 25.

^h Joel ii. 17.

division sake may branch itself into a proem, and seven several petitions adjoined unto the same.

I. "When you pray," saith Christ our Saviour, "say after this manner, Our Father which art in Heaven."

This proem may inclusively be understood at the beginning of every petition. In that Christ, first of all, teacheth us to call God Father, we are in the first place emboldened to make our suits unto Him; lest we might say as Abraham, What be we which are but dust and ashes, to speak unto God? But when we consider Him as a Father in the very beginning of our prayers, we acknowledge His love, and His bounty and grace, to move us to come unto Him: the wandering son said, "I will go to my father^h." Secondly, it is a name of privilege; He hath given us, saith the Apostle, His Spirit, "whereby we cry, Abba, Fatherⁱ." Thirdly, it is a name of providence, "your heavenly Father careth for you^k." But how come we to call God by a

^h Luke xv. 18.

ⁱ Rom. viii. 15.

^k Matt. vi. 32.

name of love, of privilege, of providence? Surely He that willed us to call Him Father, hath made Him our Father: "He hath given us power to become the sons of God^l." "Who durst," saith St. Cyprian, "pray to God by the name of Father, if Christ our Advocate did not put these words in our mouths?"

In the old Law, God is called by the name of a Lord: I, the Lord: there His people are called servants. Now from the name of Lord, He is called Father, and His people from servants are become sons, and all by the means of Christ: "I ascend to My Father and your Father^m."

Now calling God Father, as it is a name of dignity, for it is thought to go well with the children of a rich and loving father, so is it a name of duty, and as He hath the properties of a Father to love, to care for, to pity His children, so should we have the properties of children, to honour, to serve, to obey this Father of ours; lest it be said as it was once

^l John i. 12.

^m John xx. 17.

of some, "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Meⁿ."

IV. Again, as we say Father, so say we Our Father, not my Father. We pray all in one, saith St. Cyprian, *Pater Noster*, Our Father; a form of prayer presupposed to be said of many, amongst whom there is a fraternity. Let not the rich or mighty despise the poor and miserable, it pleaseth Christ to have us altogether call to God, our Father; and therefore none ought to disdain other, but mutually to pray one for another. And as we say Our Father, so we shew Him to be also an heavenly Father, in that we mention Him to be in Heaven we confess what manner of Father we mean, to wit, heavenly, to distinguish Him from other fathers, and that we be not degenerate children, we should be heavenly also as He is heavenly.

In Heaven! what more powerful than to have a Father in Heaven. In Heaven! then howsoever we are distressed on earth, the comfort is, we have a Father in Heaven. In

Heaven! therefore is our inheritance in Heaven. In Heaven! therefore praying we lift up our eyes unto the hills, as the Prophet speaketh^o. In Heaven! not as placing His Divine power only there, which filleth Heaven and earth, but we say in Heaven, because there chiefly His glory doth shew itself; there He blesseth the Saints and Angels. Well then, saith St. Austin, we have a Father in Heaven, let us not cleave to things here on earth; we have found our Father, we have found our country.

V. In the first of the seven petitions we say, "Hallowed be Thy name." Beginning to pray, we forget our own necessities, and make a petition first for God our heavenly Father His glory. We remember we have the dignity to be children; being children of such a Father, therefore by and by we pray for our Father's glory, "Hallowed be Thy name." Christ sought His Father's glory^p, and Christians also ought to seek His glory, and the hallowing of His name. It is said of

^o Psalm cxxi. 1.

^p John xvii. 4.

the wicked, "you have polluted My Name^p," but the care of the children of God is to hallow God's name.

In that we pray that God's name should be hallowed; it is not but that God's name was holy from everlasting; "for Holy and Reverend is His name^q." But in this petition we pray that the name of God may be hallowed both of us, and in us; of us when we say "unto Thy Name give the praise;" in us when we live worthy of Him. Many have had great and mighty names, but none a holy name except God, and therefore we pray, "Hallowed be Thy Name," not that we only would hallow it, but let it be hallowed; let all Jews and Infidels honour God, that His name may be hallowed "from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof^r."

VI. In the second petition we pray, "Thy kingdom come," and this petition we utter and mention, saith St. Chrysostom^s, with minds lifted up. Seeing we have a Father and a

p Isai. lii. 5.

r Psalm cxlii. 3.

q Psalm cxi. 9.

s In Orat. Dom.

kingdom, we therefore pray that we may once come to the enjoying hereof, saying, "Thy kingdom come." Seeing we are here in the way where all is weariness, and on the contrary side, knowing our inheritance is above, love, which is impatient of delay, makes us desire the coming of this kingdom. Now as God hath a kingdom of glory, so also hath He a kingdom of grace. And as in praying for the kingdom of glory, we bid all earthly glory, riches, delights, and honours farewell; so also do we pray, leaving all sinful desires, for the coming of the kingdom of grace within us, that is God, that His Spirit may rule and reign in our hearts, and there have the pre-eminency. And herewithal we pray also for the kingdom of His Church; that whereas Christ is called a King, and His kingdom in the world is spiritual, we pray that His sceptre may sway, that all may yield obedience and faith to His government, rejecting the tyranny of the prince of darkness; and for all these, severally or altogether, we pray, "Thy kingdom come."

VII. In the third petition we pray, "Thy will be done:" this may be called a petition of duty; for seeing we expect in time to come a kingdom in Heaven, our dutiful desire is to do His will who gives us this kingdom. Like that care of the Apostle, "Lord, what wilt Thou that I do^t?" As one ready to do His will, Who in mercy called him.

"Thy will be done," that is, not our obstinate and rebellious wills, but, Lord, Thy will revealed in Thy word. We will, and we will not, say the wicked, but Thy will Lord, be done, the godly say, saith St. Chrysostom. There is nothing more fondly loved, or more hardly resisted, than our own wills, therefore our desire is, that we may cross our own wills, referring all to the will of God. And this petition we pray with a *sicut*, saying, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven;" Lord, those of that joyful assembly in Heaven do Thy will above, and we desire to do Thy will beneath, or to begin for a time to do that

^t Acts ix. 6.

here on earth, which we hope to do with Thy Saints and Angels for ever in Heaven.

VIII. Now because we cannot continue the doing of God's will here on earth, without things necessary for our earthly condition, therefore in the fourth place we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," wherein first we acknowledge, that we wholly depend upon God's providence to receive all things necessary for the preservation of the life present. Secondly, that we crave them at His hands when we say, "give us," according unto that of the Prophet, "Thou giving, we gather^u." With His giving there is our endeavouring; with God's increasing, Paul's planting. Give, an action of liberality and love: give us our bread; our bread, not ours as due, but our bread, or the bread of us Thy children, which Thou art wont to bestow, and in mercy to give unto them. *Quotidianum*, daily bread, or as some say, τὸν ἄρτον ἐπιούσιον, *supersubstantialem*, our super-substantial bread, to wit, the bread of life.

We pray to-day, "Give us this day our daily bread," or as some say, day by day; and if we live till to-morrow, we pray the same again, as if every day we look up unto God, that He may in mercy look down upon us, and send things necessary for the life present. Some think this petition to be the poor men's petition only. No, rich and poor must pray for this bread; for what are earthly creatures to maintain life without His blessing, who is the Author of life? Last of all, when we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," we pray, saith an ancient Father^p, neither for riches nor for delicates^q, but for things necessary unto life, according to the wise man's prayer, neither too much that we do not forget God, nor too little that we forswear Him; only a competency, and so be thankful to the Giver of all. Last of all, we pray for bread, and by bread is understood all necessary sustenance for man's life in this present world.

IX. Having begged at the hands of God things necessary for the life present, because,

p Chrysost. in Orat. Dom.

q Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

as the Prophet Jeremiah saith, “ our sins do make God take these good things from us^r ;” in the fifth place therefore we pray for the forgiveness of our sins, saying, “ forgive us our debts and trespasses,” whence we learn that our sins are debts and trespasses; for when we sin, we run in debt and commit trespass against our God. We owe Him obedience, and therefore are indebted by our sins; we do Him wrong, and therefore are trespassers, which we beseech Him in mercy to forgive; and so this petition is *ἔξομολόγησις*, an acknowledgment or confession what we are, to wit, sinners. And this we all pray, saith Cyprian, because we all sin, “ forgive us our trespasses ;” ours, and therefore of our own committing; we may not post off the matter as Adam did, with “ the woman that Thou gavest me caused me to sin^s,” whereas indeed the sin was his own in giving consent.

This forgiving of our sins we crave with a clause annexed, “ as we forgive them that trespass against us ;” whereby we shew first,

^r Jer. v. 25.

^s Gen. iii. 12.

that there is a necessity laid upon us of forgiving them that offend us ; secondly, we shew of what spirit we are, in that we find in our hearts to forgive others, and therefore we beseech God to forgive us. Cassianus^t writeth, that some in his time would leave out this clause, as the Pelagians would have done the former, for which they were taxed by a council^u. We must think Christ taught us a most heavenly form of prayer which is complete, and impiety were it to alter the same : we must shew mercy that look for mercy, and forgive that look for forgiveness ; wherefore with charitable minds we ought ever to say, “ forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.”

X. When we have craved pardon for our sins past, we begin to be careful for the time to come ; and so in the sixth petition we pray against “ leading into temptation ;” the forgiving of our sins is a procuring of good ; the

^t In Orat. Dom.

^u Conc. Mil. sub Innoc. I Can. sep.

not leading into temptation is a removing away that which is evil.

In this petition, first, we acknowledge our own infirmity; ready to be led into temptation; and secondly, we pray for a preventing grace, that when temptation comes, we be not overcome of it. St. Cyprian reads it, "and lead us not, and suffer us not to be led;" not that God doth lead us, but we rather lead ourselves in consenting to temptations when they come, whether they be temptations of peace or persecution, afflicting or flattering; and of the two, the latter is the more dangerous. Some of the ancient Fathers understand it, that in this petition we pray to be delivered from all temptations whatsoever, because we know not how soon we may fall; others by leading into temptation, that we be not willing to consent, and be led or carried away by temptations and so seduced; and this may be our humble petition, either for preventing temptations before they come, or when they come that they do not prevail.

XII. And this is an entrance to the seventh

and last petition; "but deliver us from evil." We pray to be delivered from all evil, that is, if sometimes we fall into temptation, yet that we do not fall like the elephant who falling, riseth not again; but either to be delivered or to come forth. This praying to be delivered from all evil, doth include all dangers and mischances both of body and soul, present or to come, by sea or by land, sleeping or waking, bodily or ghostly, that may befall ourselves or others, when we say "deliver us," which we also insert in the other petition, as not praying for ourselves alone, for our own good and safety only, but for the good and safety of others as well as for our own. To all which petitions we beseech God, who hath vouchsafed us to pray unto Him, to give His blessed grant from this time forth and for evermore. Amen.

CHAPTER XVI.

What we learn by Christ His often praying, especially by His prayer at His agony in the garden.

PARADISE, or that garden wherein Adam committed sin was called a garden of pleasure; but paradise, or that garden wherein the second Adam made an expiation for sin, may well be called a garden of sorrow. In the first of these gardens, sin began; in the second, a satisfaction for sin: in the first of these gardens, the first Adam by his disobedience provoked God; in the second garden, the second Adam by his obedience appeased the wrath of God, when in His agony His prayers went up to Heaven, and His drops of water and blood fell down upon the earth. His prayers going up to appease God in Heaven, and His tears falling down for the good of men beneath on the earth.

II. Let us here duly consider, that the Son needed not of Himself to have prayed unto

His Father in Heaven after this fervent manner; the only intention of His mind lifted up, had been sufficient in Him to have manifested His desires to God; His praying in His agony, was to give us an example of praying earnestly and feelingly to God in our agonies as He prayed in His agony.

III. For our better instruction in our best, and best disposed meditation, let us here call to mind a little the circumstances touching Christ His praying, and in what manner He made His supplications at this time. So doing putteth men in mind of His wonderful and unspeakable love in praying for us men, and for our salvation; to wit, how He humbleth Himself in prayer, submitting His will unto His Father's; how He chooseth to pray in secret, that He prayeth for to give us an example; how He exhorteth to pray instantly by the example of the distressed widow, and of the friend who by continual knocking obtained his desire; by all which we may perceive how behoveful a duty prayer is.

IV. Now to move us to a due consideration

of prayer, let us observe at this time Christ's praying in the garden^r. For He prayed not only in the desert, a place of distress, but in the garden also^s, a place of pleasure, to teach us to pray as well in prosperity as in adversity.

Wherein let us observe and well consider these circumstances. First, that it was solitary, for that He now left His Disciples, as He had oftentimes before done, when He went alone to pray; which doth commend unto us praying in our secret closet, and when we are solitary and apart from all others.

Secondly, He prayed with humiliation of body: St. Luke saith, "He kneeled down and prayed^t;" St. Matthew and St. Mark, that "He fell prostrate upon the earth^u." The Evangelists may soon be reconciled, for it may seem He first kneeled, and afterward for faintness He was fain to fall prostrate; and this commends unto us humiliation in praying. When He raised Lazarus, and restored the dumb man to the use of speaking, we find "He

r Matt. xxvi. 36.

s John xviii. 1.

t Luke xxii. 41.

u Matt. xxvi. 39. Mark xiv. 35.

lifted up His eyes^v to Heaven," which was sometimes His gesture in praying. When Moses prayed, "he held up his hands until the going down of the sun^w;" which holding up of the hands David called "his evening sacrifice^x." When St. Stephen prayed, "he kneeled down^y," according to Christ's example here in the second place mentioned.

The third circumstance to be observed in this our Saviour's praying, is, that it was just and right; for He subjected His will to the will of His Father, saying, "If Thou wilt;" which doth teach us to resign ourselves in all our petitions wholly unto the will of God.

The fourth, that it was with sorrow, for He was in an agony, and this doth put us in mind of that of the Apostle, "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what to pray as we ought, but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with sighs which cannot be expressed^z."

The fifth, that it was with perseverance;

v Mark vii. 34. John xi. 41.

w Exod. xvii. 11, 12.

x Psalm cxli. 2.

y Acts vii. 60.

z Rom. viii. 26.

for He came three times unto His Disciples ; three times and in three places was He tempted ; and three times did He here pray, and willed His Disciples to pray, that they might not enter into temptation. O, what devotion was here ! His last supper being ended, He goeth forth, accompanied with His Disciples and speaks unto them, as a loving father upon his death-bed, when he hath not much to say to his children, gives precepts which they should remember when he is gone from them, of which precepts this was not the least, " Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation ?." This precept doth commend unto us the use of fervent prayer ; " If thou shalt suffer," saith Bonaventure, " whatsoever adversities in the life of man, be thou a man of prayer ; if thou wilt mortify thine own will and evil lusts, be thou a man of prayer ; if thou wilt know the wiliness and subtleties of the devil, be thou a man of prayer. If thou wilt obtain force and strength to overcome his temptations, be thou a man of prayer. If thou

wilt live merely in the service of God, be thou a man of prayer." By which we may see the benefit, yea, the great benefit of prayer and fervent supplication.

V. But to return to our Saviour's praying at this time, Peter, James, and John go with Him^a; for those to whom He had before showed the glory of His transfiguration, to them would He now show the humility of His Passion, that as they had seen glorious things, so now should they see humble things: to these He saith, " My soul is sorrowful unto death." Unto may be taken indefinitely; and so, " My soul is sorrowful unto the death;" that is, until a satisfaction for the sins of the world be made by death; or unto may be taken inclusively, and so, " My soul is sorrowful unto the death," that is, until the scandal of My death be turned again to the life of faith, " My soul is sorrowful." Here Anselm crieth out, " How cometh it to pass, O my God, that Thou, taking upon Thee the nature

a Matt. xvii. 1.

of man, shouldest begin to forget Thou art God !”

VI. Now we are to consider that our Saviour Christ assumed this fear and sorrowfulness for many causes ; first, to prove the truth of His humanity, for it is natural unto man to fear death, and of this natural sorrow was our Lord sorrowful ; yet so do we understand Him to be sorrowful and to fear, not with that fear and sorrow which ordinarily drowneth reason, and causeth man to overshoot himself, as Peter, for fear of death, denied his Master^b ; this manner of fear was far from Christ, for He came for this intent to suffer, and reproveth Peter^c when He dissuaded Him from going to Jerusalem, and suffering there.

VII. There is a kind of stepping back, naturally incident unto all, which at this time appeared in Christ, as other human actions did, His eating, His sleeping, His hunger, and the like, all which were in Christ, sin only excepted, properly as in man. Now this sorrow and fear was otherwise in Christ than

^b Mark xiv. 68.

^c Mark viii. 33.

in us. In us for the most part the passion of fear doth go before the rule of the will and the judgment of reason, but in Christ it did follow after, for both the will and the judgment of reason went before; for when He hungered and thirsted, He did it willingly, and of judgment; He feared willingly, He sorrowed willingly, and of judgment. By this then, there is nothing to be considered in Christ as constrained, but all is to be believed as voluntary, and therefore fear and sorrow, as they were natural, so were they voluntary and rational. Wherefore the original of the text saith, ἤρξατο λυπεῖσθαι, "He began to fear, He began to be sorrowful^d," and not, "He was fearful." Fear and sorrow began in the part sensitive, but came not to the mind or understanding; for when the Evangelists say, "His soul began to be sorrowful," there the soul is taken for the part sensitive, in which are passions. And here we may consider, that Christ could not die by nature, as Adam could not die until he had committed sin; "for the reward of sin,"

d Matt. xxvi. 37.

saith the Apostle, "was death;" but as He took upon Him human nature, so did He also, without our infirmities, suffer that voluntarily which was incident to our nature, yea, to our fall.

VIII. A troubled passion ariseth in the mind, either besides the decree of reason, or in opposite manner against the decree of reason. The former of these two is sometimes incident unto men, even the best amongst men; the second to the imperfect only. A perfection far surmounting both was in Christ, for in Him sense was subject unto reason, reason unto will, the will to the understanding, the understanding to God.

IX. Christ was sorrowful, saith St. Jerome^e, not for any fear of death, which nature refuseth, but for the scandal of His Disciples, the infidelity of Judas, the ruin of the Jews; and thus it is not dissonant from truth, saith St. Ambrose^f, if He were heavy in soul for His persecutors. We see, according to the judgment of the ancient Fathers, how far our

e In Matt. cap. 26.

f In Luc. cap. 10.

Saviour's fear was from distrustful thoughts or weaker passions, which to think to be in Him were most impious; but in these sufferings being rightly considered, we see a most admirable conveniency in all, without fancying of unlearned and irreligious conceits concerning a desertion of God.

X. Pause here a little, O Christian soul! and devoutly call to mind the great wonders of our Lord: behold, He hath often prayed for thee, but now He prayeth for Himself: O, marvellous humility, for being Almighty, co-eternal, coequal with God, He would notwithstanding for the time suspend His Divinity and be subject to fear!

XI. To come to the matter of instruction, for that is also behoveful, in this sorrowing of our Saviour, we learn these things. First, to keep down, by the rule of reason, sorrows and passions that arise in us, to restrain them and keep them in obedience unto the will. Secondly, not to despair if sorrow and fear at any time surprise us, even unto death. Thirdly, to be sorrowful for the state of others, after

Christ's example. Fourthly, amidst all our sorrows to repair only unto God, and commend ourselves unto Him, as Christ did, by prayer, and thus uniting our sorrows with His, Who in our sorrows sorrowed with us, we shall the better bear them.

XII. This done, Christ departed a stone's cast from them, and there prayed, "Father, if it be possible, remove this cup^g." He saith, "Abba, Father," and we too, saith the Apostle, say, "Abba, Father," twice Father, both according to the Hebrew and Greek, shewing that God is now Father of Jew and Gentile. He saith, "if it be possible," referring the grant of His petition to the will of God; if it may stand with the same will and not otherwise. He prayeth for the removing of that cup, yet so that looking to obedience, He goeth forward towards His suffering and saith, "Thy will be fulfilled^h." What of human desire He before mentioned, He now in action proceedeth to relinquish, as if He would say, Let not that be done which I have spoken

g Matt. xxvi. 39.

h Matt. xxvi. 42.

according to human affection, but let that be done for which I was sent into the world, and now am willing to suffer. That which He required as man, to wit, the removing of the cup, He now leaveth, as resolving wholly to proceed with the will of God. But was the will of Christ any way differing from the will of His Father? No, verily, for He saith, "I seek not My own will, but the will of Him that sent Meⁱ:" and this manner of conditional prayer should be remembered of us in praying, not our wills, but, Lord, Thine be fulfilled.

XIII. He prayeth the third time the same thing, shewing that He goeth to pray, and to pray the self-same thing too; not of forgetfulness, but of very fervency. Whereby we may observe, that to pray and pray again is a part of high devotions. The dove went forth of the ark the first time, and returned sorrowful as she went out, still the waters were up; she goeth forth the second time, then the flood is abated, and she brings a

i John v. 30.

branch of olive, a sign of quiet and peace^k. First, a sorrowful prayer goeth forth, still the waters of adversity are up; the prayer goeth forth again, behold the waters are fallen; prayer brings a crop of olive, joy and tranquillity of mind.

XIV. In the time of Christ's praying, there appeared unto Him an Angel from Heaven strengthening Him^l, at the appointment of His heavenly Father. And here observe we three things: first, that our Saviour prayeth long before He received an answer, to show we must not by and by give over; secondly, that the greater His agony was, the longer His prayer was, to show that in greatest agonies we should continue long in prayer; thirdly, in that the Angels came and strengthened Him, to signify that if we continue with constancy, the Lord will send us strength by His Angels. In that the drops of blood came down, it showed the greatness of our Saviour's conflict, wherein He seemed both to do and to suffer. His blood was true blood, according to His

^k Gen. viii. 8. 11.

^l Luke xxii. 43.

natural existence, but yet miraculous and supernatural, if we respect the manner; for it is above nature to pour out together water and blood, which Christ did both alive and dead.

XV. Behold again, O Christian soul! thy Redeemer and Saviour cast into a bloody sweat for thy sins; yea, moved He is to shed for thee tears of blood. For when by virtue of His Godhead He saw before Him all the pains and torments which were to be inflicted upon Him, His Manhood began for to fear and fall into a most violent bloody sweat. In this it is manifest how bitter His Passion was, Whose only thought so much changed nature. Of this our Saviour's sweating may be gathered these several observations: first, the greatness of His agony; secondly, that this agony caused sweat when it was a cold night; thirdly, this sweat falling upon the earth, we may gather that the earth, or men inhabiting the earth, have benefit thereby.

XVI. Now was presented before the eyes of the Son of God, on the one side, God's just judgment and wrath towards man yet un-

appeased; on the other side, death and hell as yet not vanquished, Himself left as it were alone to enter the conflict, putting forth His hand to receive the cup, and yet He beginneth to pull it in again, but after a little while goeth forward with full resolution to the work well begun, which He brought to a most happy end.

XVII. Let the devout man learn, in all the pressure of adversity, to set before him Christ's agony in the garden; be it that doubtful objects between fear and sorrow do much obscure our natural delights, here have we for times of trouble a precedent to follow; but chiefly in the agony of death, when sick men are panting and labouring for life, they are said then especially to endure an agony, for then beginneth a conflict indeed; nature drawing one way, and obedience to the will of God another; the spirit goeth forward, and the flesh draweth backward; besides many thoughts occur about leaving the world, and going to answer for our time here spent, with many other things seldom before thought upon.

Our Saviour was in an agony when death approached; whence Gregory saith, "Death approaching, an agony is present, and not without cause; for then is the soul put in greatest fear, when after a little while she finds that which never will be changed or altered." And therefore we do beseech the Lord of all comfort, Who was Himself in an agony, for to comfort us in all our agonies. Amen.

XVIII. But how is it that the servants are joyful in their agonies, and the Lord of these servants is sorrowful in His? The Lord was sorrowful, because He bare the burden of our sins, the servants are often joyful in their agonies, because then "Christ is their righteousness;" so then by His agony we learn how to pray, yea, and to take comfort in our agonies.

CHAPTER XVII.

That Christians may take comfort amidst the calamities of this life, by that of our Saviour; "Let not your hearts be troubled."

"GIVE wine," saith Solomon, "to those that have grief of mind^m." Christ seeing His Disciples to have grief of mind, for why, the Shepherd being taken away, the sheep will be scatteredⁿ, He gives them the sweet wine of consolation in these words; "Let not your hearts be troubled, you believe in God, believe in Me also^o;" as if believing in Me you believe in God, believing in God, you are to take comfort of heart.

He that knew their troubled hearts; partly in that He had said, one of them should betray Him, and partly in that He had told them He must shortly depart from them, began now to comfort their hearts after this manner, "Let not your hearts be troubled; you be-

^m Prov. xxxi. 6.

ⁿ Matt. xxvi. 31

^o John xiv. 1.

lieve in God, believe in Me also, and let not your hearts be troubled."

Christ knowing that His own Apostles were left unto the injuries of the world, that they had undertaken a military profession, and were to fight under the red colours of His cross, He here comforts them against afflictions, not so much by taking away afflictions from them, that they have them not, as by strengthening them when they come, that they faint not; to the outward man He foretelleth a cross, but to the inward man a stay or fortress: a cross to the outward man, that it exult not; comfort to the inward man, that it languish not, "Let not your hearts be troubled."

II. In this of our Saviour, we see whereunto this His exhortation tends, not that they should not be troubled at all, for that is above human nature; Himself, as we have heard, was troubled in His agony; but the trouble here spoken of is that which hindereth reason, dismayeth the understanding, is opposite to peace and tranquillity of mind; this is trouble of heart. When the soul is cast down by

distrust and heaviness; to shake off all this, "Let not your hearts be troubled; you believe in God, believe in Me also." When an earthly captain doth comfort his soldiers, the uttermost he can do is to strengthen them, as Judas Maccabæus did by exhortation P. Christ doth strengthen his soldiers, and also puts strength into them.

III. A noble prince sometime of great devotion and valour, seeing his army much dismayed, when they beheld the huge multitude of their enemies coming toward them, and perceiving by their countenances that their hearts began to fail them, ascending to an eminent place, he makes them a very hearty oration, which he drew into three heads. First, he shows their cause was just, and that God was wont to prosper just enterprises. Secondly, that their enemies were those whom his and their ancestors, who now bare arms under him, had often foiled. Thirdly, that being so few, if they prevailed against that huge multitude, the victory would be glorious; how-

soever, for himself, he would die in the battle or return in triumph. His oration was no sooner ended, but a voice was heard throughout all the army, every one crying, Forward, forward! the event was, they happily prevailed.

A multitude of crosses are ready to assail us in open field, which may cause our hearts to be troubled, but a most noble Champion we have, that assures us that our cause is just, that our enemies are those whom all God's servants have ever resisted. If we prevail, our conquest will be heavenly; our Champion Himself will live and die in our defence; why should our hearts be troubled? Nay, we have won the day; "You shall have troubles in the world, but be of good comfort, I have overcome the world^q." Forward, forward, in the name of God, our enemies are foiled enemies, our battle is not so much to overcome, as to cleave unto Him who hath overcome in the assaults made against us; we are rather seduced than vanquished in these

assaults. *Seducta fuit mulier*, saith the Apostle, "The woman was seduced," not *victa fuit*, "she was vanquished:" to shew that temptations do rather seduce than conquer or overcome.

But here ariseth a double question, the first, seeing we are delivered from our enemies, how is it that we have still enemies? The second is St. Austin's, *si alligatus est Satan*, if Satan be bound, why doth he still molest God's children? To the first question the answer is, we are delivered from our enemies^r, that is, from the servitude of our enemies, sin, death, and Satan. To the second question the answer is, Satan is bound so as he cannot hurt us; tempt he can, but unless we come within his bands, and consent, he cannot hurt us. That we should not like Job's wife, stumble at the adversities of this world, as at a rock of offence, and think ourselves the rather out of God's favour, we may perceive we have undertaken a condition of life subject to suffering, it is a military profession.

IV. Because Christ knew the hardness of suffering, therefore where He spake of suffering with Him, there He spake also of sitting with Him in His kingdom, "You shall sit upon seats, judging the twelve tribes of Israel^s." Like the physician, who is wont to mix sweet sirups with his bitter potions, that the patient may be the more willing to receive them: so our Saviour here comforteth His Apostles, not by promising to take all troubles from them, but when troubles come, to assist and aid them. "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to winnow you as wheat^t," and so he may, he shall; but "Simon, I have prayed for thee." God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, comforteth^u us in all our tribulations; the Apostle saith not, God sends us no tribulations, but He comforteth us in them. Again, he saith not, God comforteth in some tribulations only, but in all our tribulations, as blessed be God, is the Apostle's inference.

By faith, saith the same Apostle, the people

^s Luke xxii. 29, 30.

^t Luke xxii. 31.

^u 2 Cor. i. 3.

passed the Red sea^v, and by faith we pass the Red sea of many tribulations of the world: also it was not Peter's body, but Peter's faith, saith St. Ambrose, that walked upon the waters. That which Christ said unto some, He saith unto all: "Let not your hearts be troubled." The waters rage, but there is One mightier than they. "God is on my side," saith David, "I will not fear what man can do unto me."

Men might have been encouraged by the example of Camillus, of Scipio, of Aristides, and others, which have been hated even when they had deserved well of the commonwealth, and Christian men might have for their encouragement the examples of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, and other of the old Prophets suffering tribulation. A cloud of witnesses might be collected in this case, to shew how they must look for troubles in the world, but our Saviour proposeth unto us His own case only as a leading case for all posterity, "If the world hate you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you."

Marvel not at this, saith St. John, "if the world hate you^v." "There be three things," saith Thomas Aquinas^w, "which we are wont to marvel at; the first, when any thing is great; the second, when it is new; the third, when it is seldom and rare." Now that the world, that is to say, the lovers of the world, do not affect the children of God, it is no great thing; the physician thinks it no great matter if the lunatic man whom he binds, do strike or kick him; alas! he is frenzy, and knows not what he doth. Secondly, it is no new thing to have trouble in the world; we find it so in Abel and Isaac, and all from the beginning. Thirdly, it is no rare thing, for there is nothing more common, and therefore our hearts should not be troubled, that is to say, overmuch troubled.

V. The world and the tempter both boast of giving pleasures unto carnal men, but come to the performance, and these pleasures are very torments; Christ promiseth tribulation in the world, but come to the inward man,

^v John xv. 18.

^w Tho. Aquin. in 1 Epist. John, cap. iii.

and there we find a world of joy. The root of the tree is bitter, but the fruit is pleasant; Christ promiseth rest; you shall have rest, but it is rest unto your souls; not worldly rest. His burden then it is by love, and we are made strong by grace: a burden, this is wont to unburden sinners. He that sets us in this journey knows what is fittest for passengers, and therefore we may endure with comfort these outward adversities when they come: we must not cast away the nut, for the bitterness of the rind. Happy leprosy was it that made Naaman worship the God of Israel^x in his heart. The Prophet David saith, it is good for him to have been in trouble: if thou wert not troubled, perhaps thou wouldest not devoutly have called upon God, thou wouldest not have worshipped God, thou wouldest not have known God. The sharp storms of the winter they make the trees bare, for a time they stand as dead, yet there remains still life in the root. In like manner, afflictions of the world make the

x 2 Kings v. 17.

members of Christ seem desolate, and the stormy winds of persecution scatter abroad the leaves of worldly prosperity, yet there is life in the root, there is faith and joy in the heart. It is otherwise with the wicked, and the joy of worldlings; they think felicity to consist in abundance of riches, in pleasures, in glory, and such like; all this is but outward and momentary, like a little sunshine in winter, for one fair day it hath oftentimes ten foul, and such a number of troubles as almost the former pleasures are dashed and vanish to nothing. When men see storms in winter they do not much wonder at it, and why? winter is a time of storms; so in this life we should not think much to have tribulations at a time of tribulation.

VI. The godly have indeed often outward adversities, but such joys within, as if all adversities were nothing, and this principally cometh to pass by Christ His means; for whatsoever He touched, He did sanctify it, and therefore hunger, thirst, persecution, they are not now so grievous, but work all for the

good of the faithful. The waters of Marah which were so bitter that none could drink them^y, Moses but casting in the wood that God appointed him, they became sweet; the crosses of the world were grievous until Christ His cross was put in amongst them, now their taste is altered. A strange sight was it in times of persecution, to see a few lambs to overcome a multitude of wolves by no other weapons than patience and faith, "and to rejoice," as Tertullian saith^z, "in the midst of torments." Wonderful it is to hear how St. Paul, endued with grace from Christ, doth even challenge and provoke tribulation and anguish and hunger; yea, life and death, as if he would speak like a man of courage to all the adversities of the world, "Shall you all separate me from the love of Christ^a?" No, you shall not; thereby teaching us to be so constant, that nothing should separate us from the love of Christ.

VII. Another reason which our Saviour

^y Exod. xv. 23, 25.

^z Tertul. ad Scap.

^a Rom. viii. 39.

useth to comfort His Disciples against tribulations is, " I go to prepare a place for you^c," and therefore be of good hope. Moses, to stir up the people in times of their distress, speaks unto them after this manner: " The land you go to possess is not as Egypt^d, but a champaign country, and goodly to enjoy, which the Lord visiteth with the early and latter rain." We have a promise of a better land than ever Moses promised: " In My Father's house are many mansions^e." The journey was long and wearisome for Jacob, a weak and feeble person as he was, yet by reason of inward joy he had conceived in his heart, he well endured it^f. " Be it," saith St. Austin^g, " that we have not temporal deliverance from troubles, this sheweth that we do not embrace the Christian religion for the commodities of this present world, but for the joys of a life to come, which will make amends for all." The benefit of a calm is best welcome after a storm; liberty is wont to be most plea-

c John xiv. 3.

f Gen. xlvi. 1.

d Deut. xi. 10.

g Aug. lib. cap. 22. de Civitate Dei.

e John xiv. 2.

sant after a time of bondage: "You shall sorrow," saith our Saviour, "but your sorrow shall be turned into joy^h," your sorrow, not every one's sorrow, but your's, who have abidden with Me in My temptations, therefore I appoint unto you a kingdomⁱ.

When the Prophet David speaks of the sorrows of this world, he calleth them waters. "Save me, O God, for the waters are entered even to my soul^k." In another place he goeth further, saying, "The floods are risen, O Lord, the floods have lift up their voice, the floods lift up their waves: the waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly, but yet the Lord that dwelleth on high is mightier^l." St. Peter saith, "Lord, bid me come unto Thee on the water^m." And surely unto trouble, as unto the raging waters, God saith, "Hither shalt thou come, and thou shalt come no furtherⁿ." The conclusion is, "Let not our hearts be troubled: ye believe in God," &c.

^h John xvi. 20.

ⁱ Luke xxii. 28, 29.

^k Psalm ixix. 1.

^l Psalm xciii. 4, 5.

^m Matt. xiv. 28.

ⁿ Job xxxviii. 11.

CHAPTER XVIII.

What we learn by that of our Saviour exhorting all that would follow Him, to deny themselves, and take up their cross daily.

BEING forewarned, and armed against the trials of the world before they come, it remaineth that we be ready to undergo them when they come. Christ shews us plainly what we must look for if we will be His disciples when He giveth out in open proclamation, "Whosoever will follow Me, let him deny himself^o." In the text of the Evangelist, our Saviour having before spoken of His own suffering, He by and by speaks of their suffering who would follow Him: first, that they should not think that His suffering did absolutely exempt them from suffering all crosses of the world: no, for I have taken up My cross, and you must take up yours. Secondly, He sheweth Himself as a careful governor in the ship, who in a calm is wont to instruct

^o Mark viii. 34.

the mariners against the tempest likely to follow; and this He doth as it were in familiar manner, by shewing what Himself had done, and then what His disciples should do; first, what He would suffer, and then what they should suffer.

As if He should have said, What, Peter! and should I not go to Jerusalem for fear of suffering? Yes, it is not only My cause but thine, and the case of you all who are, or desire sincerely and seriously to be My disciples, "Whosoever will follow Me let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

II. Here Christ speaketh generally unto all, of what estate and condition soever, high and low, rich and poor, "whosoever." When He spake of some special Mysteries, then turning Him to His Apostles, He saith, "To you it is given to know the Mysteries of the kingdom of God:" but speaking of the way to follow Him unto His kingdom, He speaketh universally unto all, "Whosoever." It is for all to know, "Whosoever." Again, as He

speaketh universally, so doth He speak lovingly; "Whosoever will," not as forcing any, but lovingly inducing all, leaving His own followers to their own willingness. "Whosoever will," by which He doth more effectually draw them, than if he had used all the threatenings in the world.

The stayed men and gray heads in Israel said unto Rehoboam, "If thou speak kind words to this people, this people will be thy servants^q;" Christ speaks kind words unto us all, and deals most bountifully with man, according to the dignity of His person. He which having laid up rich treasures to bestow amongst his friends, if he will or command the public crier to say, This and this treasure is ready to be bestowed by a bountiful lord, may it please you now to come and receive it? doth he not now more persuade, than if he should by a sharp edict pull and draw men to receive this treasure against their wills?

III. Again, he which hath in his household two sorts of servants, the one free-born and

of his alliance, the other slaves and bondmen, when he requireth any service of the former, he speaks unto them mildly, according to their ingenuous disposition, but the other he commands absolutely as common servants. We are as of the chiefer sort of Christ His family, if not having freewill, yet will freed by grace; nay, we are of His own alliance, and therefore when He speaks unto us, He speaks lovingly as unto them that love Him, "whosoever will:" but unto His other creatures, as the heavens, the earth, the sun, the moon, He doth not require but command them; so in the time of Joshua He commanded the Sun to stand still^r; in the time of Elias He commanded the heavens to be shut^s: when some rebelled against Moses, He commanded the earth to open and swallow them^t: but with man, to win his heart, He deals most gently, and calls after a mild manner, "Whosoever will." The antecedent showeth the manner of calling, the consequent containeth the duty of him that is called, "Let him deny himself,

r Josh. x. 12.

s 1 Kings xvii. 1.

t Numb. xvi. 30.

and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." The antecedent shows God's *volo*, I will; the consequent ought to have our *volumus*, we will. When Christ's will is seen in calling us, our will should not be defective in following Him.

IV. In this consequent we see that somewhat is required at our hands, if we will be Christ's followers, to wit, the denying of ourselves, and the taking up of our cross daily; and who would not that loves his own welfare, but follow Christ?

The three children followed God, and how? By going out of their place? The text saith, "They followed God in their hearts^u." Rebekah was said to go and inquire of the Lord: whither went she? From the place where He was not, to the place where He was? No: "I the Lord fill Heaven and earth^v:" she went not from place to place; it is not required of us so to do in following of Christ; but she went from life to life, from manners to manners, from good to better, from grace

^u Song of the Three Children, 18. ^v Jer. xxiii. 24.

to grace : and this is to follow Him. “ Diversely,” saith St. Austin, “ did our Saviour deal with three sorts of men concerning their following Him : one offers himself, and is refused, Master, I will follow Thee ; another, that saith nothing, is called, *sequere Me*, Follow Me : a third deferred when he was called, and is blamed.” The first respected his profit ; for all his profession, his intention was profit ; the second did mind natural affection ; the third was much like the first, to whom Christ saith, “ The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests ; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head^w.” “ What is that,” saith St. Austin^x ? “ crafty imaginations, ambitious desires, have room in such men’s hearts, but the love of Christ hath no room at all in them.”

In the world suit is made to be followers of men that have countenance above others ; but to be one of Christ’s followers in sincerity and truth, which is far better, yet for this few

w Luke ix. 57. 59. 61. Aug. de Verb. Ser. 7.

x De Verbis Dom.

care little at all. The poor followers of Him in humility, denying themselves, taking up their cross, shall one day have more countenance than all this world's pomp is able to afford. Small suit is made for this, nay, Christ Himself becomes a suitor to us, when He calleth, "Whosoever will." The people said to Joshua, "The Lord is our God, and we will serve Him:" so may we say, Christ is our Redeemer, and we will follow Him.

V. Now what is it that is to be done by him that will follow Christ? Marry two things: the first, let him deny himself; the second, let him take up his cross daily. For the first, he that will follow Christ must love Christ; for He which requireth a cheerful giver requireth a cheerful follower: But how must he love Christ, as himself? yea, more than himself, for he must even deny himself. And how must a man deny himself? Sure, as Abraham did in forsaking his father's house; that is, Adam's natural desires, that seem pleasant unto him; so saith the Prophet, "Forget thy father's house, then shall the King

have pleasure in thee^y.” Adam chose rather to do his own will than the will of God; if we deny ourselves, we conform our wills to the will of God.

“ We best see,” saith St. Chrysostom, “ what it is to deny ourselves^z, when we behold what men are wont to do in denying others: when any casteth off an unfaithful companion and graceless body, he neither rejoiceth at his prosperity nor is grieved at his adversity; he cares not what becomes of him. The like is done in denying of ourselves, that is, our sensual desires, to grow out of love and liking of them, and clean reject them.

To deny our goods, our friends, yea, our very pleasures, is very much: and yet to follow Christ we must go a step further, that is, to wit, we must deny ourselves; it is not only required that we deny that which is ours, but even that we deny ourselves also: but how come we to deny ourselves? First of all, we deny ourselves when we yield obedience in all things unto God, which obedience is better

^y Psalm xlv. 10, 11.

^z Chrys. in Hom. Matt. xvi. 24.

than sacrifice^a: “for in obedience,” saith St. Gregory, “our own will is sacrificed:” in these external oblations the flesh of some other creature is offered. In the old Law they had many kinds of sacrifices, which were killed and offered: now, saith Origen^b, “this manner is altered; instead of a ram we kill our ireful passions; instead of a goat our unclean affections; instead of flying fowls our idle thoughts and wandering cogitations.” All these must we kill in denying ourselves, yea thus we kill them that would kill us, and sure the faithful by suppressing the motions of sin make Martyrs of themselves: this is not one day’s work, or children’s play, but it is a care of all our life to deny ourselves.

Secondly, we deny ourselves when we resist the provocations of sin offered, as Joseph did when he withstood the temptations of his master’s wife^c; assuredly of him it may well be said, that it was as great a miracle to see him chaste, in that present provocation of his mistress, as it was to see the three children

a 1 Sam. xv. 22.

b In Levit.

c Gen. xxxix. 8, 9.

walk without hurt amongst the fiery flames^d; so excellent a thing it is, so acceptable unto God, to deny ourselves when provocations of sin are offered.

Thirdly, we deny ourselves when we put up with wrongs and injuries of the world, saying with Stephen, "Lord, forgive them, and lay not this sin to their charge^e."

Fourthly, we deny ourselves when we cross our own wills and relinquish our natural desires, and when we begin to be centurions over our own affections, and say to this or that, Go, or Come, referring ourselves to the will of God, that so we may not be said so much to live, as Christ by grace may be said to live in us^f.

Last of all, we deny ourselves when we cease to sacrifice unto the net, or attribute any thing to our own actions, much less to our own merits, and therefore least of all in the high Mystery of our justification, every one is to say with the Apostle, "By the grace of God, I am that I am;" and again, "Not

^d Dan. iii. 25.

^e Acts vii. 60.

^f Gal. ii. 20.

I, but the grace of God in me.” And this is the sum of denying ourselves, being the first degree in following of Christ, whosoever will be His follower, let him deny himself.

The second clause of the condition is, (for we are His disciples upon these and these conditions,) the second clause I say is, and take up His cross daily; “let him deny himself,” is the first *ἀπαρνησάσθω*, to deny altogether for good and all, and then follows, let him take up his cross. “Let him deny himself,” by declining from evil, “and take up his cross,” by suffering evil, “and follow Me,” by conforming himself unto Me and My laws prescribed him. “Let him deny himself,” by renouncing his own will; “take up his own cross,” by bearing patiently lesser or greater persecutions; “and follow Me,” by walking in My ways.

And let him take up his cross; it is not said, and carry his cross; but let him take it up; to signify a voluntary and willing suffering, because evil men may have crosses,

but they bear them, and do not take them up; they bear them grudgingly and impatiently, not willingly and thankfully; as Jeremiah said, "This is my sorrow, and I will bear it," so ought they to say.

The cross is said to be daily, because we can never live without crosses, and therefore must daily prepare to suffer, or at leastwise have a mind ready to suffer. It was not without cause our Saviour pronounced a blessing to those that suffer persecution, because to the judgment of the world they are subject to a curse. Daily, for there is none lives, or can live, but he shall find, either from himself or others, a cross to take up. The cross of humble men is injury; the cross of religious men is fasting and watching; the cross of rich men is the contempt of the world; of the poor, want and scarcity; so every one hath his cross.

In this we see that our Saviour, in telling us we must take up our cross, doth not deal after the manner of worldly rulers, who to have troops and trains follow them, are wont

to tell of pleasures and profits, and such like ; Christ speaks of taking up a cross, of suffering, of denying oneself ; “ If any will follow Me, let him take up his cross.” One would think that this persuading was a kind of dissuading, and a mean rather to make most men sooner forsake Him than follow Him. And yet such was the power of His calling, so great was the hope of immortality, that this calling of Christ filled the world full of Christians. Notwithstanding these cold rewards, the manifold crosses they were to endure, yet they left all their hope that the world might promise, and followed Him by afflictions. That same, “ and Follow Me,” doth sweeten the most bitter and sharpest adversities of all : to follow Christ, what else is it but the greatest felicity that can happen unto man ?

But here we see we must expect a cross, as our Saviour foreshows us, and take no offence thereat when it cometh. We see Christ suffered His own Apostles to hunger, to be in danger of tempests, to go forth in the world

amongst many enemies. Let it not grieve us to hear the gate is strait and the way narrow, because the end thereof leadeth unto life. The crosses of the world are many, as we see in Abraham, who was fain to forsake his own countryⁱ and live in fear among strangers; in Sampson, who was taken of his enemies and scornfully handled^j; in Zedekiah, who in his old age had his eyes pulled out^k, and was to fain to end his days in sorrow.

Heathen men make mention of Polycrates, of Samos, and of Cambyses, who after much glory suffered sorrowful crosses: but for the faithful let not the world's crosses dismay them. The natural sun is profitable unto us not only in summer when it ripeneth our fruits, and is nearer unto us, but in winter also, when we sow our seeds, and the heat thereof is furthest off; so is it with the Sun of Righteousness. Unto Tobit the bitter gall opened the eyes of his body, but unto Nebuchadnezzar the bitterness of affliction opened the eyes of his soul. For one Jonathan whose eyes were

ⁱ Gen. xii. 1. ^j Judg. xvi. 31. ^k 2 Kings xxv. 7.

opened by honey, there are many Tobits whose eyes are opened by gall.

The crosses of this world they are unpleasing to human palates, yet they are often medicinal: the engine is laid to the bulwark, but the fortress is not won: the tree is beaten with storms, but the root is sure: afflictions assay the outward man, faith within remains safe. In all these Christ sends first the oil of gladness in the state of grace, then a full deliverance in the state of glory: first, a *reficiam* is given to the languishing soul, then a *satiabere*, when it shall see God in glory; when the lamb shall be no more in danger of the wolf, nor the corn of winds and storms. The people of God did first fetch many sighs in Egypt, but after, they sung many more psalms¹ upon their deliverance.

¹ Exod. xv. 1.

CHAPTER XIX.

That Christian men ought to live in all orderly and dutiful obedience to princes and governors.

As in the art of writing he cannot attain that faculty that doth not carefully look upon the example set before him, so fareth it in this world, that unless we continually do cast our eyes on Him, who passed His time here in such orderly manner, that He grew in favour with God and man, we cannot keep that order for obedience to government which we ought to keep.

Heathen men can tell us that the society of man doth consist in ruling and obeying. The saying of the Grecian is true, *τάξις μητῆρ τῶν ὄντων ἐστὶ, καὶ ἀσφάλεια*, "order is the mother and preserver of things." Where none doth guide others, what order can be looked for? Where order is not had, confusion will follow, and the success of confusion is plain ruin. Where men shake off obedi-

ence and live as they list, what peace can be preserved? Where peace is not, what state either in Church or commonwealth can long stand? Where rulers are not, some run headlong, they well know not whither, in the bent of their own wills; others are waving up and down in opinions, all are as a body out of course, and subject to a dissolution: on the contrary; where governors ordain a law and all hearken unto the law, as concerning every man in particular, there is obedience, there is concord, there is continuance in well doing.

II. Now above all other, those who live under the law of laws, to wit, the law of grace, for them to show all dutiful obedience to rulers and governors placed over them by God, what more seemly, more Christian? Branches of one vine, stones of one building, fellows in one family, children of one Father, members of one Head, nay, heirs of one kingdom, what more beseeming then amongst these people to obey rulers, and rulers to obey God?

When Moses is praying, Joshua leading, Israel obeying, God blessing and prospering

all^m, "O happy are the people that are in such a case!" The water, saith St. Cyprianⁿ, that is separated from the fountain drieth: the bough that is cut from the tree withereth: the light that is removed from the sun vanisheth. The people all say, he that will not obey Joshua let him die^o. Christian religion, as it doth bind men in duty and devotion to God, so doth it also contain them within the lists and limits of duty and obedience towards man, who doth rule for God, knowing that "the powers that are, are ordained of God^p."

The only example of our Saviour Christ's obedience doth overthrow at one touch the lofty and Babylonical building of stubborn spirits, who refuse conformity and obedience to government amongst men. At His very birth obedience was shewed, when the blessed Virgin came to Bethlehem to be taxed^q: His Circumcision was His obedience to the Law: His presentation in the Temple was the same: His paying tribute, and exhorting others to do

^m Exod. xvii. 12—14

ⁿ Cypr. de uni.

^o Jos. i. 18.

^p Rom. xiii. 1.

¹ Pet. ii. 13.

^q Luke ii. 5.

the like, shewed how much He allowed and established civil obedience to superiors and governors in giving every one his due.

The blessed Apostles Peter and Paul exhort hereunto; the one willing us to obey for God's sake; the other for conscience sake. The practice of the primitive Church, not only in laying down their lives by obedience when rulers were tyrants, but when the Church had the countenance of authority under those good emperors, Constantine, Jovinian, Theodosius, Valentian, and others, sheweth how dutifully and orderly Christians lived for obedience above all nations of the world. Eleutherius^r commendeth Lucius, a king of this land, for his orderly governing the people according to the laws of God; and St. Ambrose^s praiseth Valentinian for the same.

III. Now where is the opinion of those men who thought themselves freed from obedience by a vain surmise of Christian liberty? Surely it is so slender as almost it is not worth

^r Epist. Eleuth. citatur inter leges Ed. I.

^s Ambros. in Orat. Fun.

the refuting^t. The misunderstanding of some Scriptures, which they have hammered in the forge of their weak brains, has caused them to rove and range into humours, for so are they wont to be stricken with a spirit of giddiness, that would be singular, and above all others.

“Princes of the nations bear rule; amongst you it shall not be so^u.” What a far fetched consequent is this, and a silly reasoning? The Apostles must not have a tyrannical authority one over another, as Nero, Caligula, and such tyrants had; therefore Christian people should live in obedience to superiors. We are freed from the Law, therefore called to such and such Christian liberty; but subjection taketh away liberty. St. Peter tells us that ignorant men pervert Scripture^v: the answer is plain, Christian liberty freeth us from the bondage of the Law and the servitude of sin, but most fitly agreeth with obedience to rulers, and in rulers to God Himself, Who saith, “By Me

^t Sleyd. in Com. de Anabapt.

^u Luke xxii. 25, 26.

^v 2 Pet. iii. 16.

kings reign." The Apostle telleth us in the latter days, "Men shall be lovers of themselves, disobedient, heady, high-minded, having a show of godliness; and from such," saith he, "turn away^w." St. Jude also saith, "These are murmurers and complainers, walking after their own lusts: but edify yourselves," saith he, "in your most holy faith^x."

"God standeth in the congregation of princes^y," saith David; and therefore the first precept is, "Fear God:" the second is, "Honour the king:" as if the Apostle St. Peter would say, both go together. To shew that we must homage our heart to our heavenly Father, our obedience to our earthly governor. It is so manifest as none cannot but know it; yet seeing we live in that calamity of times, wherein men forget almost Whose creatures they are, we had need to be put in mind of this duty which we owe unto the King of kings. Faith saith, He is our Father; obedience saith, *ergo* worship Him. Our allegiance towards Him is devotion and love, and nature hath

w 2 Tim. iii. 1—5.

x Jude 16. 20.

y Ps lxxxii. 1.

taught us to acknowledge as much. The light which is born with us doth shew us we have a duty to perform to the God of Heaven. The greatest emperors of this world are His subjects; they have God over them, and men beholding what they do. Ask the poor and naked Indians, they will tell us that religion is no matter of policy, and that there is another magistrate than the magistrate of this world, to whom in nature they yield obedience.

We are all God's creatures by existence, His clients by law, His children by adoption, His people by obedience. Thousand thousands serve Him in glory, Who knows as Verity, sits as Majesty, loves as Charity, and rules as Equity.

V. Now, as we shew our obedience to God, so ought we to shew obedience also to those who have a subordinate power, and are set over us by God. It is not thee, said the Lord to Samuel, but it is Me whom this people have refused: it is not so much the ruler set

over them by God, as God Himself, whom disobedient people refuse to obey. "He that resisteth the power," saith the Apostle, "resisteth the ordinance of God^z," because "there is no power but of God." For the confirmation of this, we find that God hath punished, from time to time, murmurers and mutinous people, as by that of Dathan, Corah, and Abiram, whom He made an example for others^a. And the Apostle St. Paul hath reference to this when he saith, "Neither murmur you as some of them murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. These came upon them for an example^b." O, saith the Wise Man, "wish no evil in thine heart unto the ruler of the people, for the birds of the air shall disclose it^c." Should we not honour them whom God hath honoured? And love them whom God hath loved? Do we not sit down under their government as under a shadow keeping us from heat and storms, when we are defended from invasion abroad and oppression at home?

z Rom. xiii. 2.

a Numb. xvi. 32.

b 1 Cor x 10, 11.

c Eccles. x. 20

VI. When the queen of the South came from far to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and saw his princely order and magnificent state, what doth she but by and by begin to magnify the Author of Solomon's estate? "O, blessed be the Lord thy God," saith she, "which loved thee, to set thee on the throne as king instead of the Lord thy God, to do equity and righteousness^d!" As if she would have said; O Solomon, such a state, such a government, such a peace, such a time, such a temple, such wisdom, they are not of man, nor from man; "Blessed be the Lord thy God, which loved thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel:" they are from God.

VII. Affectionate were the hearts of the people to David their king, whom God had set over them. What, should David adventure himself? O no, better it were that many miscarry, yea, ten thousand say the people, as it were with tears of thankfulness: God save our David, for if David go, the light of Israel is extinguished: they would not the least hurt

should befall him who was the stay of them all: and therefore, as humble suitors, they seem to beg his preservation at the hands of God.

The Apostle willeth that “ prayers, and supplications, and giving of thanks, be made for all, for kings, and all that are in authority, that we may live a peaceable life under them in all godliness and honesty^f.” Great cause had the men of Israel to beseech God that Josiah might continue with them; for if he were taken away, it was because he should not see the evil to come. “ O,” saith the Prophet, “ save and deliver David from the hand of strange children, that there be no leading into captivity, nor no complaining in our streets^g.”

And thus should we add unto obedience, love; to love, prayer, for those whom God amongst men hath set in commission with Himself to rule for Him: “ To these,” saith Tertullian, “ honour is due, for their excellency; fear, for their power given them; obedience, for civil duty; tribute, for the pre-

f 1 Tim. ii. 1.

g Psalm cxliv. 10. 13.

servation of peace; love, for affection, which bringeth forth prayer and piety^h:" so what should Christians of all other in the world, but honour them whom God hath placed in His own room for the establishing of His own laws and worship here beneath amongst men, and especially appointed over His Church, which is the company of Christian people, for the quiet and conservation thereof; according unto that spoken long before: "kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothersⁱ."

CHAPTER XX.

That Christians may lawfully enjoy earthly commodities, and possess riches, and how they should be affected towards them.

MAN consisting of two parts, the one earthly, the other heavenly, hath answerable hereunto means allotted him of God, for the preservation of either; that is, both for body

^h Tertull. ad Scap.

ⁱ Isai. xlix. 23.

and soul; and furthermore, temporal things for the state being, and in good time eternal things for the time to come.

Before God created man He first made him provision, and said, "Adam, have dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowls of the air, and every thing that moveth upon the earth." And again, "Adam, I have given thee every herb bearing seed, and every tree in which is fruitj:" and so every thing serves Adam, and Adam is only to serve God. Abraham's servant said, "God hath blessed our master Abraham marvellously: He hath given him sheep and oxen, silver and gold, menservants and maidservants^k." Jacob, speaking of his two bands or great herds of sheep and camels that went before him, saith, "With my staff," or without any provision at all, a poor lone man as it were, "came I over this Jordan; Lord, I am not worthy of the least of all Thy mercies^l." As if Jacob should have said, these kine and bullocks, these asses and foals, all this substance round about me, they are the

j Gen. i. 28, 29. k Gen. xxiv. 35. l Gen. xxxii. 10.

mercies of God, and so come from the great storehouse of Heaven.

In the first part of the story of Job we may see the description of a true Christian, as thus: "Job was an upright and just man, and one that feared God and eschewed evil^m."

The next thing mentioned of him is, "his substance was very great;" yea, he was the "greatest of all the men of the east:" wherein we may observe, he did not forget God when he should most have remembered Him, that is, when he was blessed and prospered by Him: but, as he abounded in riches amongst men, so did he also increase or abound in devotion towards God, Whom he feared. The text saith, "Job did sacrifice every day:" here was the right possessing of earthly substance, rich and godly together: this was a rich man indeed, when both met together, rich in goods and goodness. "If riches increase," says the text, there is the increase of riches, which are given from God Himself, "set not thy heart upon them;" there is the

use of riches, and with what proviso we ought to enjoy them.

II. To call in question whether God's people may possess earthly riches is an invention more strange than true. He which would have every tribe a part allotted for an inheritance, for them and theirs amongst His peopleⁿ, did intend no other, but that they should successively have an inheritance to possess: and why? "He hath given the earth and earthly things unto the sons of men." The laws of nature and nations tell us that amongst all men there must be *meum et tuum*, "mine and thine:" and the Gospel doth well accord with this, as requisite amongst Christians, *accipe quod tuum est*, take that which is thine, or that which God hath allotted thee out, and given thee to enjoy^o. The Disciples say to Christ, "Where shall we buy?" So we see there was somewhat possessed wherewithal to buy.

It was a mere irreligious, rapinous, and scoffing device of Julian^p, to spoil the Church

ⁿ Josh. xiv. 1, 2. ^o Matt. xxv. 23. ^p Naz. Orat. contr. Julian.

and people of God, and prey upon their goods, alleging the text, "If thou wilt be perfect, leave all that thou hast^q;" only seek treasure in Heaven; this is the fittest for men of your profession, who have renounced the world.

The like said Auxentius, when he would have the Church and Church possessions, to waste and consume them as he list; but St. Ambrose tells him, "If Naboth would not leave his father's inheritance, should I leave Christ's inheritance?" If it were a motion of God's Spirit, to give to His service, then from whence cometh that motion that would take from it? St. Peter saith to Ananias, "Why hath Satan filled thy heart, that thou shouldest lie unto the Holy Ghost, and keep away a part."

There were but shifts pretended when the greatest persecutors of Christians could formally tell them, "Their God was no gatherer of money, or possessor of riches, and that their account should not be for things transitory: wherefore they did them good, in unburden-

ing them of these troublesome possessions; and as for greater revenues, Down with them, down with them, even to the ground."

III. There was no fitter way, as these men thought, of ruining Christ's religion, than by taking away those means whereby the exercise of religion was continued; and surely it was so, for soon would the public practice of religion decay, were there not some means by temporal commodities for the continuance thereof. To this end, therefore, endowments were first allotted by God Himself to the tribe of Levi^s; and since hath He stirred up good men to shew great bountifulness this way, to set forth His worship, or "worship Him in the beauty of holiness," as the Prophet speaketh.

The people never thought it a burden to bring unto the tabernacle^t, and the well-disposed have been glad they had somewhat to dispose for the setting forth of the service of God; accounting it a mercy of God, they had the honour to do good, to be able to

^s Josh. xiii. 14.

^t Exod. xxxvi. 5.

distribute somewhat to the maintenance of His service.

For the use therefore and exercise of Christ's religion, we see in the first place, not only how lawfully, but how religiously, these temporal and earthly possessions may be enjoyed; and that the Church may use lawfully those benefits wherewith God hath blessed her.

Secondly, for the state of Christians in general, both the hungry conceit of those, of whom Epiphanius maketh mention in former times, and the running fancy of the Anabaptists of latter time, who would bring in a mingle mangle, partly consisting of a Platonical community, and partly also of affected poverty, is most dissonant from the state and government of Christians, who should rather be helpful than chargeable to others, and by works of devotion, hospitality, and such like, honour God.

Pharaoh cries upon the Israelites to have them make their stint and number of bricks^u, and yet takes away that which should yield

^u Exod. v. 10, 11.

the means to accomplish their work. Christians must feed Christ in the hungry, clothe Him in the naked, harbour Him in the harbourless. Let these men shew how this should be done if earthly riches be not possessed.

But riches, say they, are the mammon of iniquity, and the possession of them is the root of evil. True; some men hurt themselves with weapons, not using them as they ought, as these do in misapplying of Holy Scriptures; will they therefore take away the use of both generally from all? This is a far-fetched inference, and far from the rule of common reason. That riches are called the riches of iniquity, it is not so said as if they were in themselves so; but the default is, that oftentimes they become so by the fault of those that possess them. It is not the matter of money, but it is that same love of money that is the root of evil. Satan soonest prevailed with Judas that bare the bag; yea, that loved the bag.

This was the cause of that our Saviour spake, "How hard it is for rich men to enter into the kingdom of Heaven," because rich

men for the most part are so carried away with the love of riches, that they oftentimes forget and forego the love of God for a little dross and baggage of the world.

This was the cause that made the young man in the Gospel sorrowful^v. Every word of our Saviour was a sword that did pierce his heart; "Go," and therefore make no delay; "sell," and therefore depart from hence; "all that thou hast," and therefore thy whole substance; "give," and therefore freely bestow, "unto the poor," and therefore to them that cannot recompense thee again. The text saith, "He was rich, and went away sorrowful;" and surely so it is, that rich men in these cases are sorrowful.

Christ our Saviour likeneth riches unto thorns^w; and if riches be in covetous men's hearts, no marvel though they have many sorrows; for the nature of thorns is, they are pricking and choking, and they grow thick.

IV. Now, though riches sometimes, and to some men are the occasion of evil, when

^v Matt. xix. 21, 22.

^w Matt. xiii. 22.

we seek them to follow vanities and live without controlment, it doth not therefore follow that they are so generally unto all. True it is that we should not trust in such uncertain riches, nor stay ourselves upon these inferior and transitory things, but mind a state of all continuance to come: yet this renouncing of the world in affection and love, doth not enjoin an utter contempt of all earthly benefits, which we may use to the good of ourselves and others, and yet sometimes forsake, for the love of heavenly things.

When Christ our Saviour said, "Fear not them that can kill the body^w," He doth not exclude all reverence and fear to be given such; but the meaning is, Do not so fear them, as you neglect to fear Him which "hath power to kill both body and soul." When He saith, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but labour for the meat which perisheth not^x," He doth not thereby dehort us from labouring for the meat which perisheth; but this is spoken by way of comparison, that is, Do not

w Matt. x. 28.

x John vi. 27-

so labour for the meat that perisheth, that you neglect to labour for the meat that perisheth not. So when He saith, "First seek the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof," it is not contradictory to that of the Apostle, "Provide aforehand for things necessary^z:" provide for things necessary hath its time, so that of our Saviour's, *primum quærite regnum Dei*, be first remembered; first seek the kingdom of Heaven, and the righteousness thereof. It was not said, in carefulness, but in labour, that is, in labour thou shalt eat thy bread. Nay, it is not so much the care, as the inordinate care of earthly things, which the Greek text hath, *μέριμνα*, that is there dehorted.

The care for the life present and things necessary thereunto, is in the Apostle commended; but in the Evangelist, the care of heavenly things is preferred: he that provideth aforehand for things of this life, as he that giveth his virgin unto marriage doeth well^a; but he that provideth for things ap-

y Matt. vi. 33. z 2 Cor. viii. 21. a 1 Cor. vii. 38.

pertaining to the life to come, as he that giveth not his virgin doeth better. The desire of things necessary for our abode here is needful; but the desire of and for our heavenly being, is most needful of all. Rachel was the fairer, though Leah was the fruitfuller^b. Our only care to possess Heaven and heavenly things, is like Mary's "part," which our Saviour Christ said "should never be taken from her^c."

V. A sufficiency for the maintenance of life, the lawful use of worldly goods and possessions may be continued, so we use them as mariners do their oars, to help them along till they come to the haven; or as wayfaring men do their staves, which willingly they lay aside when their journey is done: the scope is that we be indifferent unto riches, and think of them in Christianity, as the philosopher himself did concerning the state of felicity: "If we have them, they help us; if not, they do not undo us;" because Christians can be rich with a little, and content howsoever, having learned

b Gen. xxix. 17.

c Luke x. 42.

with the Apostle "both to abound and to want; knowing that they brought nothing into this world, neither shall they carry any thing out^d."

"Think, and think again," saith St. Austine^e, "that we Christians are not born for this world, or to enjoy the riches of the same, but we look for farther and better riches to be received and possessed in the world to come; that is, according to our Saviour's counsel, we "lay up treasure in Heaven."

VI. It is the insatiable desire of riches which is often reprehended: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be oppressed with the cares of this life^f." The eagle dies not so much of age as of hunger: of all vices none doth more wax old with us than covetousness. Should we be so earnest upon the world, which we must shortly leave? How should we use the commodities thereof, but as the Egyptians did their bondmen, for use only, evermore looking for greater riches elsewhere! When Judas

d 1 Tim vi. 7. e Epist. ad Jul. lib. xi. f Luke xxi. 34.

Maccabæus^g saw his men over-greedy of a little gain, and thereupon to begin to desist from the battle they had in hand, he willeth them to follow on the pursuit of the enemy now flying; “for,” quoth he, “in the end you shall safely take the spoils, or at last you shall have riches enough.”

Let us not stay upon these transitory things too long, forgetting the present occasion we have in hand, but let us go forward in the course of Christian profession we have undertaken: there will come a time when we shall take the spoil, and have treasure to the uttermost of our desires.

VII. The touchstone is said to try gold, and gold is said to try men: if one should have offered Alexander the Great, a commodity to the value of 20*l.*, and shewed him the mean and manner how to gain it, Alexander would scarce have hearkened or given ear to such a motion, because his mind was upon gaining kingdoms and empires. In like manner, tell a heavenly-minded man of compass-

ing great possessions, and laying up much treasure, he will not much respect the discoursing of these matters; for why? he minds the getting of greater matters, or the attaining of a better possession; and after this manner did Abraham and Jacob, and many others, possess riches, having their minds ever set upon better riches to come.

And here is the manner how Christian men may enjoy riches, and hold earthly possessions: "If you do not love them as you possess them," saith Gregory, "you do leave them in possessing them: we may leave them even when we possess them." The reason is, we do not love them, or set our hearts upon them; we rest content with that God hath bestowed upon us, and for that insatiable desire of gain, in the name of God let it go.

A misery it is under the sun, men live poor, to the end they may die rich; and make no end of gathering, they know not themselves for whom, so they may leave rich executors; but they respect not the estate of their needy souls. There are riches that no shipwreck

can take from us : God grant us to be “ rich in all good works, laying up a good foundation for the time to come^h.”

CHAPTER XXI.

In what sense Christ exhorteth to forsake father and mother, and all for His sake, and what we learn thereby

WHEN we hear by that of Simeon and others, that Christ our Saviour was the “ light of the Gentilesⁱ,” that by Him came “ grace and truth^k,” and that He is “ our righteousness^l,” we readily hearken unto all this, and we profess we can find in our hearts to believe it, and we do well in so doing ; but when we hear on the other side, that in following of Him we must take up our cross, deny ourselves, leave father and mother, and all for His sake^m, we draw backward, and begin to say with the men of Capernaum, “ This is a hard saying and who is able to endure itⁿ ?”

h 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19. i Luke ii. 32. k John i. 17. l 1 Cor. i. 30.
m Mark viii. 34. Luke xiv. 26, 27. n John vi. 60.

We persuade ourselves we love Christ, and think we have discharged this love in a little believing in Him. No; it is not so; if we did love Christ indeed, then would we forsake all strange love of the world, and things thereof for His sake. "How canst thou say thou lovest, when thy heart is not with him whom thou sayest thou lovest^o? It is a good lesson from a bad teacher.

II. All creatures, say the philosophers, desire their centre, and do nowhere rest but in their proper spheres: the sparks of fire tend upward, the floods and all rivers have many turnings and windings, but they never cease until they come into the sea, that common receptacle of all waters. The soul of man hath her centre, which is God: she never resteth until she be there; and when she is there, she would not be removed: "Lord, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is unquiet until it be with Thee^p?"

We need not marvel to see men, which are addicted unto the love of the world, or the

^o Judg. xvi. 15.

^p Aug. Med.

flesh, or any thing, except God, how they are often troubled and vexed, how they are weak, weary, and full of discontent; the reason is, they are not in their proper sphere, which is, not in the love of God. It is said, that when Christ fled from Herod, and came into Egypt, all the idols there fell down: and sure it is that when the love of Christ doth come into our hearts, all the idol desires of the world and the flesh will fall to nothing. “No man can serve two masters^q ;” that is, at one time two masters commanding contrary things; so doth the love of Christ and the love of the world; wherefore let us leave the one and cleave unto the other; lest leaning unto the one we forsake the other, and ourselves be forsaken of Him.

III. And should we not forsake and forego all the world for Christ His sake? Should we not leave chaff for gold? puddle-water for the fountain of life? straw and stubble for precious stones? nay, vile earth for Heaven itself? When Elisha followed Elijah his master^r,

^q Matt. vi. 24.

^r 1 Kings xix. 19, 20.

he left his oxen ploughing, as if he had now a better husbandry in hand. When Christ called His Apostles, they left their fishing, and yet continued a trade of fishing still, for now they should of fishermen become "fishers of men," they followed Him. Peter saith, "Lord, we have left all:" What was this "all," but some old boat, and a few rotten torn nets, for these were now in the mending. Was this that "all?" Yea, and they left more too at this time than Alexander the Great could desire; for they left the love of the world for the love of Christ, which is more, and of more worth than many worlds.

By this example of the Apostles, we learn to forsake three things for the love of Christ: by their nets, the pleasures of the flesh, which are wont to take men and snare them in; by the ship, the riches of the world, which doth carry us away from the haven of true rest; by their father and mother, those things that are nearest and dearest to us in the world, all these must we leave for the love of Christ. Yea, and ourselves also; but how can that

be? "As thus," saith St. Gregory; "we must leave ourselves as sin hath made us, and stick unto Him by Whom we are made by grace."

IV. There is a nearer conjunction between Christ and the faithful than there is with father and mother, for of them we have a being in nature; but of Christ, a being in grace; of them our being, of Christ our well-being. To honour father and mother, is the fifth commandment^t but to honour God is the first commandment of the Law; to shew that to honour God is above all. It is said, "Man shall leave father and mother, and live with his wife^u;" but he must leave father, and mother, and wife, and all, to dwell in love with Jesus Christ. St. Jerome saith, "If my father stood weeping on his knees before me, and my mother were behind me pulling me back; if all my brethren, sisters, kinsfolks, and children on every side were about to retain me in a sinful life, I would despise them all; fling off my mother, run over my father, to go to Christ who calleth me."

^t Exod. xx. 12.

^u Mark x. 7.

“Whosoever hateth not his father for My sake^v :”

A strange speech to hear Charity itself speak of hate, and much more to exhort it : but consider how it is spoken, not literally or simply to hate, for how could He speak so, that so much honoured His father and mother, and gave a law for the performance of this duty of love ? But we must learn that this was spoken comparatively, to wit, if father and mother will be loved more than Christ, or draw us from His love, then as God said unto Abraham, “Get thee from thy own country and kindred :” so get thee in this case from father and mother : yea, go a step farther, get thee from thine own life also. In God’s name, forsake thy own life ; forsake all rather than forsake the love of Christ : O leave not the love of Jesus Christ, for if that forsake us, all the world cannot comfort us.

In the eighth of St. Matthew’s Gospel one excuseth himself not following Christ, saying, “Master, suffer me to bury my father :” he

had a love to Christ, but a regard of his father stays him from the performance of any duty unto Him : but our Lord admits no excuse of carnal affection when He calls. “ The father,” saith St. Austin, “ is to be honoured, but evermore God is to be preferred : the father in earth should have honour, but the Father in Heaven more.”

V. One compareth the state of a distressed man unto that steward in the Gospel^w, who was called by his master suddenly to give an account of great substance committed to his charge ; This man not able in the world to make any account, being afraid, his dealings had been so slender, to look his master in the face ; in this distressed condition he knows not what to do, he must give an account, a great account, and a great account suddenly. At last he bethinks himself of three friends he had and he resolves in this necessity to make a trial of them, what they would do for him. He comes unto the first of these friends, opening his grief : this friend tells him that

^w Luke xvi. 2.

he could find in his heart to do him good, but he had so many to pleasure, that he must needs be pardoned for this time, and so leaves him. This done, he cometh unto his second friend, and sheweth him, as unto the first, his miserable estate, prays him to speak a good word for him; Surely, saith he, I would speak for thee, but to tell thee a plain truth, when I come before thy master, I shall rather speak against thee than for thee. Now was this distressed man more sorrowful than ever: he hath one only friend which he had often injured, and therefore was ashamed to go unto him; yet at last he comes and makes his moan unto him. This friend had no sooner heard the case of this miserable distressed man, but forthwith he goes and maketh full satisfaction and account in his own person for all the debt.

The first of these three friends is the world, which hath so many to pleasure, as the distressed sinner finds little comfort, if at any time he crave help of it. The second friend is the law of God, which will rather speak against him than for him. The third is our

Lord Jesus, the surest Friend of all, Whose love is more dear unto us than heart can conceive; this is the Friend that will stand by us, when all fail us, and should we not therefore forsake all for His sake? Should we with Demas follow the world because it hath a little more pleasure than Paul's preaching? No: St. Paul's crown of glory will make amends for all, if with St. Paul we "keep the faith, and fight a good fight^x."

VI. What should possess our hearts wholly rather than the love of Christ? To whom should we resign our hearts, but unto Him? Yea, what have we to give Him but our hearts? Æschines, a poor student, saw many of his schoolfellows bring presents to Socrates; then he came, saying, "Sir, I have nothing to give; lo, I give myself!" "Because," said Socrates, "thou dost give thyself, thou shalt not lose thyself, but receive thyself bettered by instruction." So if we give ourselves to Christ, we shall receive ourselves bettered.

The soul is as a house possessed of a tenant,

x 2 Tim. iv. 17.

which is the love of God : when the desire of earthly things doth come, there is no room, the house is taken up before. Wayfaring men when they see the inn full, they pass along : wandering desires when they see our hearts full of the love of God, away they go.

CHAPTER XXII.

What we learn by Christ His many Miracles mentioned in the Gospel.

LIKE as for sundry other good and godly respects the life of Christ may well be compared unto a book, whereupon we may often meditate both for the strengthening of our faith, and also for the instruction of our Christian lives ; so especially in respect of His miracles mentioned in the Gospel ; for both how profitable and how pleasant a thing it is to have Christ our Saviour His miracles in remembrance, that of the Spouse in the Canticles doth shew, “ My Spouse is as a bundle of myrrh : ” what is this bundle but the odori-

ferous life of the Son of God? What are those Divine miracles of His, but as sweet perfumes much refreshing our minds? For if for no other, yet for this cause, that we might learn to know Him to be the true Messiah, which was sent into the world, Christ confirmed His heavenly doctrine by many heavenly deeds, that those whom His teaching could not move, at least His Divine working might compel.

The people were content to hear His sermons, so they might see His miracles; and Christ was content they should see His miracles, so they would hear His sermons. "If I do not the works of My Father," saith He, "believe Me not. But if I do, though ye believe not Me, yet believe Me for My work's sake^y." The works that I do testify of Me. By which we may gather whereunto tended the miracles of the Son of God, even unto the strengthening of our faith.

To manifest that He had power on earth to forgive sins, He saith unto the sick of the

palsy no more but this, "son," calling a poor miserable man, "son," and bidding him to be of good comfort.

To confirm that He indeed was the bread of life, He feeds a great multitude with five barley loaves and two fishes^z. To shew that He had authority over sea and land, He commands the waters and they obey Him^a. To make His power known over the powers of darkness, He chargeth foul spirits, who had taken up their dens in many distressed creatures, to come forth and to depart^b. To shew that He was the Resurrection and the life, He raised Lazarus from death. The Magicians of Egypt did some wonders before Pharaoh, but they came not near to Moses' doings, they were only slender illusions; yet Moses' miracles came far behind those of our Saviour; they were so many, they were so wonderful, as none but God could effect them.

II. And this order did our Saviour Christ observe; that from doctrine He proceeded to shew miracles, that if His words could not

^z John vi. 11.

^a Luke viii. 24.

^b Matt. viii. 16.

prevail, yet His works might. By which works it was evident how willing He was to heal our infirmities, and how able to help all that still call upon Him. To this end therefore, in the second place, serve His miracles to shew His power, that He was God, and that there is no disease so desperate which He by His only word cannot cure; and in the third place also they serve to shew His goodness, that there is none so miserable whom He will exclude.

Jehoshaphat the king when he was at a great strait and knew not what to do, at last he resolved upon this, "Ask counsel of the Lord, I pray thee^c," said he; as if he should say, I will go seek help of God. When we know not what to do, or which way to turn us for help, we may resolve upon this, We will go to Christ, He was merciful on earth, and shewed mercy by many miracles in helping all that came unto Him, and He is the same still, sitting at the right hand of God in Heaven.

III. But now observe we the manner of

His working miracles ; at one time He speaketh the word only^d ; at another He toucheth the diseased^e ; sometimes He cures in presence, at another time being far absent ; in some He is lifting up His eyes to Heaven^f ; in others He prayeth openly, all which want not a mystery, and appertain as well to the instruction of our faith as the direction of our life, and are as part of the Gospel, because they shew unto us good and joyful things. When the Prophets wrought miracles they were always praying^g ; but we hear Christ commanding and speaking the word only, and it is done. He commandeth the winds and the seas, He chargeth diseases to cease, and devils to depart. Unto the leper He saith, " I will, be thou clean." Unto the man that lay by the pool of Bethesda, " Take up thy bed and walk^h." Unto the widow's son, " Young man arise : " so Christ's miracles differed from the miracles of the Prophets and of the Apostles in manner of doing them.

d Matt. viii. 13.

e Matt. ix. 25.

f Mark vii. 34.

g 2 Kings iv. 33.

h John v. 8.

The Church story doth mention a certain letter written by Agbarus the Edesseanⁱ, the form whereof was this: "Agbarus the Edessean to Jesus the good Saviour in the country of Jury, &c. It is shewed unto me that Thou and Thy Disciples do give health to mortal men without herbs or medicines: for, as the fame goes of Thee, Thou dost bring to pass that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, that Thou dost cast out foul spirits, and even raisest some dead amongst the people: these things when I heard of Thee, I began to conceive this, to wit, that either Thou wert God, or at the least the Son of God, come down from Heaven."

In this we see that the miracles of our Saviour made the world to stand amazed at Him, and the faithful to believe on Him.

IV. When Christ had turned water into wine, for it was His first miracle, Who did turn sorrow into joy, the Law into grace, the Evangelist saith, at this time He began to

[ⁱ Euseb. lib. i. cap. 14.

“shew forth His glory, and His Disciples believed on Him^k.”

And what else doth the daily hearing of His Divine miracles, but daily increase in us faith more and more. Let us hear them, and believe on Him: “Blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed.”

Some will say, holy men of old wrought miracles, for at the prayer of Joshua the sun stood still^l; Elijah and Elisha did many great and wonderful works^m. “It is so indeed,” saith St. Austin, “but if you mark the manner, these were far inferior to Christ’s miracles; these wrought by prayer, Christ by his own power: they as holy men, He by His own authority as God: they, when they raised one from the dead, did no more, Christ did many and of divers sorts. It was but His word and His deed unto the blind man, “Receive thy sight;” a speech like Him that spake it.”

V. If we compare Christ His miracles with the testimonies of the Prophets long before

^k John ii. 11. ^l Josh. x. 13. ^m 2 Kings ii. 4—15.

His coming; "He hath given medicine to heal our infirmities," saith Isaiah. "The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, the lame shall leap as an hart^o," the dead men shall live, then shall He preach the acceptable year: all which accord with His miracles in the Gospel.

Why did the Pharisees so much envy Him, but for His glorious works, for which they should have loved Him. Never did they pursue Him more eagerly^p than when He had now lately raised Lazarus from the dead. Those who scorned Him upon the cross could out of their own mouths judge themselves, saying, "He saved others^q."

VI. For those miracles of our Saviour they ceased not in Him either alive or dead. See what His power did; He was crowned with thorns, and now kings and emperors do cast down their crowns at His feet. What a death was that which did such things, which all the

^o Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6. Dan. xii. 2.

^p John xi. 48.

^q Luke xxliii. 35.

living could not do! By weakness He overcame power.

Twelve fishermen in short time subdue the world unto Him by suffering, and teaching men to suffer: by dying, and teaching men to die. He wrought miracles in Himself, and, as He before promised, He wrought by His power miracles in His Apostles. He cured a woman that touched the hem of His vesture^r: and Peter cured divers by his very shadow^s: "He that believeth in Me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater than these shall he do^t." Whence we see what was done in believing on His Name.

The primitive Church had many miracles, but such miracles are now ceased: for trees newly planted are wont to require watering, but having once taken root that labour ceaseth^u. "We rejoyce," saith Thomas Aquinas^u, "that we are past the beginnings, not to require signs again. The faith of Jesus Christ, blessed be God, is established in our hearts, and Christ

r Matt. ix. 21.

s Acts v. 15.

t John xiv. 12.

u Thom. in Epist. Jo.

doth miracles still : dumb and deaf flesh is not opened, but the dumb and deaf heart, by the operation of His word : He cured visibly the blindness of the body, now He cureth invisibly the blindness of the understanding : He raised three from the dead, and so doth He still three sorts of dead sinners. The first was the Ruler's daughter, whom He raised in the presence only of her parents, putting forth the multitude^v ; these are those whom He raiseth from secret sins, known only to God and themselves.

“ The second was the widow's son, which was now carrying forth of the city toward the grave, and Christ met him by the way, and raised him^w : these are those who are going on in an evil course to the pit of destruction, but Christ happily meets them, preventing them with His grace ; being delivered to their mother the Church, they become new men and so live.

“ The third was Lazarus, who was laid in the grave, and had been four days dead^x ;”

v Matt. ix. 24, 25.

w Luke vii. 14.

x John xi. 36.

these are those that have lain long in their sins, and begin to savour: for these Christ groaneth and weepeth as He did for Lazarus, and these He calleth by His grace at their dead hearts, ready to restore them to life, and at last they revive; and when Christ raiseth these He works a miracle indeed; and yet blessed be His name! for He often works this miracle. In the miracle of Elisha wrought by the power of God, the child sneezed seven times: in like manner they that are raised from death by Christ leave seven capital sins.

VII. By six works of mercy Christ wrought miracles upon the body, and by those six also doth He work miracles upon the soul: blindness is ignorance and error; lameness is infirmity and waywardness of the will; leprosy is concupiscence of the flesh; deafness is obduration of the heart; the separation of grace from the soul is death; poverty is the defect or want of the knowledge of God. Some are blind by ignorance, these He illuminateth by the light of faith; some are lame by imperfection, these He enableth by the strength of

hope; some are lepers by contagion of sin, these He cleanseth by the merits of His death; some are hardened by the obduration of heart, these He wakeneth by the calling of His Word; some are dead by reason of sinful life, these He raiseth in the inward man to a spiritual life; some are needy and destitute of help, these He adorneth and clotheth with grace.

Christ pronounceth a woe to those cities wherein most of His miracles were done, because they believed not. "Woe be unto thee, Chorazin! woe be unto thee, Bethsaida! by Chorazin, may be understood the state of rich men; by Capernaum, of carnal men; by Bethsaida, the wise men of the world. Some of these miracles doth Christ work in Bethsaida, in Chorazin, in Capernaum, amongst rich men, carnal men, worldly-wise men; these should have believed, but did not; these ought to believe, but do not.

The men of the old world were overwhelmed in the flood for their sins when they had no

other law but nature ; and of the Heathen the Apostle saith, that “ they should be without excuse ; because that when they knew God, by the creation of the world and other visible things, yet they glorified Him not as God^z.” Then what shall we do that have the Scriptures to bring us unto knowledge ? The Jews required a sign of Christ^a when they saw nothing but signs from Him.

Sergius Paulus in the Acts saw but one miracle of the Apostle St. Paul wrought upon another, and by and by he received Paul’s preaching^b. The Apostles before ever they saw Christ do any miracles, did but hear Him say, “ Follow Me,” and they forthwith left all and followed Him. “ Christ began to upbraid the cities wherein His miracles were done^c ;” He “ began ” to upbraid, as if He doth still the same ; and He may justly do it to us, who have seen not one but many miracles, wrought not upon others only, but upon ourselves.

VIII. A diligent view of Christ’s miracles

z Rom. i. 20, 21.

a Matt. xii. 38.

b Acts xiii. 12.

c Matt. xi. 21.

doth offer up unto our religious thoughts many things worthy of our observation, as first, they move to give praise and glory unto God. So did the Israelites when they saw themselves delivered by a miracle in the Red sea^d; so did the people in the Gospel, when with astonishment they cried out, "We never saw it on this fashion; He hath done all things well: He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak^e;" and for these miracles we give glory unto God. Secondly, they teach us to have recourse unto Him in all time of necessity; for when we see Him full of pity and compassion, we learn not to despair but to trust in Him. When we see He can feed whole multitudes in the desert, where otherwise there was little hope of succour, we learn how powerful and how pitiful He was, and how ready He is to relieve. Thirdly, these, and the consideration thereof, may serve as an invincible truth for the confirmation of our faith, and also as a stay in times of distress to comfort ourselves and others.

d Exod. xv. 1.

e Mark vii. 37.

CHAPTER XXIII.

What we learn by the Divine wisdom of Christ in answering His adversaries, and others that came unto Him.

To come in order from the doings to the Divine sayings of the Son of God, for so St. Luke observeth, He began to do and say^f: such Divine wisdom was there in these that it moved all that heard Him to admiration; for why? He always spake as He that had power to stir up the heart of man. When He was disputing in the Temple, the Doctors were astonished at His understanding; when He exhorted the multitude, the people were amazed at His doctrine: when some should have apprehended Him, they say, "Never man spake like this man^g."

In St. Matthew's Gospel, the Herodians and the disciples of the Pharisees come with a question of tribute, "Master, Thou teachest

^f Acts i. 1.

^g John vii. 46.

the way of God truly—how sayest Thou, is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar^h?” They call him “Master,” when they mean nothing less than to be instructed by Him: “they praise Him,” saith St. Chrysostomⁱ, “when their intent was to entrap Him, as flatterers are wont when they would draw men whither they list.” We know, as if they would say, Thy sincerity is such, that Thou sparest none; no, not Cæsar himself: Tell us; Thy knowledge is such as Thou canst soon resolve us. Christ perceived well enough this deceitful proceeding, refuseth their praise, reproveth their hypocrisy, and calling for a tribute penny, bids them go and do their duty in the name of God to Cæsar, as they ought to do, for that very inscription of Cæsar’s did shew them as much.

These men being answered, the Sadducees came unto Him with a captious question, putting the case of a woman which had seven husbands; now to which of these should she

^h Matt. xxii. 16, 17.

ⁱ Chrysost. in Matt. Hom.

appertain in the Resurrection^k? If unto any one of them, then injury was offered unto the rest, which was evil; if unto all, then must He admit a plurality or polygamy, or power of having many together, which was worse; and therefore they thought by this subtle kind of question to have strongly inferred against the Resurrection, and to have grounded our Saviour at first dash. Christ soon disappoints them of their purpose which they missed of; and by and by shews them they erred, not knowing the Scriptures, that the Resurrection was not to be considered with any carnal conceit; for there was neither marrying nor giving unto marriage, but they were as the Angels of God in Heaven. By which answer they were at a nonplus: whose wife of all? why no one's at all: to which of them? to none of them: "There is no marrying," &c. The text saith they were put to silence, as if now they had no more to say.

II. After this, a doctor of the Law asketh Him which was the greatest commandment in

^k Matt. xxii. 25—28.

the Law¹? a question at that very time in controversy amongst the Jews, concerning the precepts of the Law moral, judicial, and ceremonial. Christ comprehends all in brief, as Solomon did when he said, "The sum of all is, Fear God, and keep His commandments^m." So the sum and substance of all the Law is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; this is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" thereby shewing him that the scope of the commandments did tend principally to love; and in this love God did chiefly require the very affections of the heart, and therefore that they should not so much busy their heads about needless questions, as apply their hearts to keep the precepts of the Law, which in a generality did consist in the love of God and the love of our neighbour; a short lesson, and yet we are our whole lifetime about it.

III. In St. John, the Scribes and Pharisees

¹ Matt. xxii. 36.

^m Eccles. xii. 13.

bring Him a woman taken in adultery, and set her in the midst, saying, "Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses commanded in the Law that such should be stoned; what sayest Thou therefore? This they said to tempt Himⁿ." If He should have condemned her, then, where is that mercy that all the world speaks of to be in Thee? If He should not have condemned her, then, Lo, thou art clean contrary unto Moses' Law! Thus by a dilemma they thought to catch Him. Christ sounds the secrets of their hearts: He writeth upon the ground, but what, we know not, and then willeth them, after examination of themselves, to proceed to execute the sentence of Moses' Law upon her. In effect the Law is just, but let just men execute the equity of this Law; by which Divine answer they all stand mute and confounded in themselves, and finding not where to reprove him, they slink away. "Which answer," saith St. Austin, "was

ⁿ John viii. 4—6.

just and gentle, Let this sinner be punished, but not of sinners."

When some other of the Scribes said within themselves, " He blasphemeth ; who can forgive sins but God only ? " Christ knowing their thoughts, saith, " Whether is it easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee, or Arise, take up thy bed and walk ? " " Here, first," saith Tertullian^o, " He sheweth He was the Son of God."

IV. In St. Luke, a diseased man is brought unto Him upon the Sabbath-day ; not to heal him were want of compassion ; but yet to heal him were to give occasion to the Pharisees of murmuring against Him ; murmur or not murmur, Christ doth the poor man good upon the Sabbath-day^p, and shews them in the end thereof that, " the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." In the same Gospel, Pilate the judge asketh Him if He were the Son of God : Christ's answer is,

^o Tert. lib. v. advers. Marcio.

^p Luke vi. 6—10.

“Thou hast said it^q,” neither affirming nor denying of Himself.

In another place, our Saviour taketh upon Him the person of an opponent, and asketh them, “The Baptism of John, whence was it? from Heaven, or of men? They reasoned among themselves, saying, If we shall say, From Heaven; He will say unto us, Why did you not believe him? And if we say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John to be a Prophet. Then they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And He said unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

V. The like question to this proposed He another time unto the Pharisees, saying, “What think ye of Christ, whose Son is He? They said unto Him, David’s. He said unto them, How doth David in spirit call Him Lord^r, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit at My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool^s? If then David call Him Lord,

q Luke xxii. 70.

r Mark xli. 25.

s Psalm cx. 1.

how is He then His Son? And they could not answer Him, neither durst they from that day forth ask Him any more questions^t.” Thus our Saviour Christ whether He were answering or opposing the Pharisees, they saw His Divine wisdom was such, that they could not but wonder at; and no marvel, seeing He was the Divine wisdom of the Father Himself.

When the Jews object unto Him, that He cast out devils by the power of Beelzebub^u, first, He asketh them, “By whose power then did their children cast them out?” Secondly, He sheweth their great error or malice, in objecting this against Him, for if He by the power of Beelzebub should cast out devils, then was Satan divided against himself; if so, then his power could not stand; and therefore the sum of our Saviour’s answer was this, “Whosoever casteth out devils the same is clean opposite or contrary unto Satan:” but I, as you see, cast them out; it followeth therefore contrary unto your assertion, that I do this, not by the power of Satan, but by

^t Luke xx. 42.

^u Luke xi. 15.

a power opposite unto his : and thus they saw themselves snared in their own snare : “ and in the trap,” as the Prophet speaketh, “ they laid for others, is their own foot taken.”

In the twelfth of St. Luke, when one said, “ Master, speak unto my brother, to divide the inheritance with me ;” Christ saith, “ Man, who made Me a judge ?” Though He were a Judge both of quick and dead, yet He refused to judge in a private inheritance, to shew, that His first coming was not to judge, but to be judged : this notwithstanding, Christians may yet be judges in matters of controversy, as the Apostle requireth v.

VI. When the young man said unto Christ, “ Good Master,” &c., our Saviour saith, “ Why callest thou Me good ? there is none good but only God.” A strange answer we would think : why Lord, Thou art God, and therefore well might he say unto Thee, “ Good :” but when we consider the matter throughly, we shall perceive that Christ in this answer had refer-

ence to that which this young man thought of Him.

In these and many other answers of our Saviour to those that came unto Him, so many instructions have we, both for the strengthening of our faith, and direction of our life, to give an answer unto every one that asketh us a reason of the hope we have, that by our good conversation we may stop the mouths of those that speak evil of us.

Again, we may learn by some of our Saviour's answers, to have respective care in answering others, sometimes as He did by silence. This in part also He exhorteth, when He willeth His Disciples to be as simple as doves and wise as serpents.

CHAPTER XXIV.

What we learn by our Saviour's acts, done upon the Sabbaths and other festival days.

THAT a careful and devout contemplation of the life of Christ is very profitable unto us, it appeareth by this, that His most sacred life is resembled unto "the tree of life in the midst of Paradise," in which some boughs were, as it is commonly in trees, high and lofty, some, lower and more easy to be reached: the high are contemplations of His Divine actions, the lower are of those which are human; a survey may be taken of both of these in His observation of the Sabbath and other festivities.

II. As concerning the Sabbath, although every feast in a generality be called a Sabbath, we find it continued all along until the coming of our Saviour Christ, who did Himself ratify the lawful use thereof by His own example, Who upon the Sabbath-day was often teach-

ing in the Synagogue of the Jews^w; and at other festival times He resorteth unto Jerusalem, as we find in the Gospel, there to keep, after the manner and ancient custom of the people of God, their feasts appointed to be kept by the ordinance of God Himself. Of this ordinance we read in Leviticus, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, The feasts of the Lord, which you call holy assemblies, even these are My feasts^x." There mention is made of the Sabbath, the Passover, the feast of unleavened bread, the feast of first fruits, the feast of tabernacles; concerning all which Moses not only mentioneth that God will have these observed, but also setteth down in particular with what circumstances, and the manner how.

III. When as now in the first table of the Law^y God had shewed both His external and internal worship in the two former precepts thereof, and in the third placed reverence and honour to be done unto His

w Luke vi. 6. Mark iii. 1. x Lev. xxiii. 1, 2. y Exod. xx. 1—12.

holy Name: that there might be also a sanctified day separated from others, for the observation of these holy duties, therefore in the fourth commandment doth He command a sanctified and holy time, to shew, that as He had given laws for His worship, so also would He ordain a time for His worship; which time He would have to be holy; which holiness He would have to resemble His own rest, the seventh day sanctified by Him, His rest, so called in that He rested the seventh day, He rested or ceased from the creation of the world. And man was created toward the end of the sixth day, that He might begin to lead His life upon a time sanctified, which was the seventh day.

This commandment God setteth down in many words, as if He were the longer expressing it, to teach His people to be the more careful in observing it. The other laws were only negative, but this both negative and affirmative; not only shewing what we should do, but what we should not do. "Thou shalt keep holy, and, Remember that thou keep

holy ; Thou shalt not labour^z,” and so forth, as is expressed in the Law. When the Prophets would shew, either wherein a people did honour God, or otherwise dishonour Him, they mention it in keeping or not keeping the Sabbaths : wherefore Isaiah saith, “ Blessed is the man that keepeth the Sabbath^a.” And when the prophet Ezekiel would shew how the people had cast off all reverence of God, he expresseth it in this phrase, “ They have polluted My Sabbaths^b.” Wherefore in observing the Sabbath, we are to consider the rest, and the sanctifying of this rest : for it ought not to be beastly rest, for that is *Sabbatum bonum* : nor a profane rest, for that is *Sabbatum Shilo*^c : they there gave themselves to wantonness ; but our Sabbath is, or ought to be, an holy rest.

IV. What our Saviour determineth concerning this, Who “ came not to break the Law, but to fulfil it^d,” we may easily perceive. That part of the Sabbath which was ceremo-

z Exod. xx. 6—11.

a Isaiah lvi. 2.

b Ezek. xx. 16.

c Judg. xxi. 19.

d Matt. v. 17.

nial, we acknowledge to cease ; but for the law moral, that still to remain the same, for the rest of our very cattle, and therefore much more the servants that live under us, and principally for the religious use it hath amongst Christians, that God may still have a sanctified day consecrated before others unto His worship, and man a vacation from bodily labours, as agreeable to the condition of his estate, which doth require rest.

Mention is often made in the Gospel what our Saviour did upon the Sabbath days ; besides His teaching, He cured many that came unto Him, and had much ado with the Pharisees, in shewing them their superstitious observation of the same ; the right use whereof He most truly observed in doing so many sanctified works therein^e, in curing diseased creatures^f ; which the rulers of the synagogue could not brook^g.

^h In the fifth of St. John, He bids the man

^e Luke vi. 6. Matt. xii. 11. ^f Mark iii. 1. 4. John v. 9.

^g Luke vi. 11. ^h Ambrose de Fide, lib. iv. cap. 3. sanatis jam mandabat officium.

that had long time lain by the pool's side, to take up his bed and walk, and cured him. "Now this," saith the Evangelist, "was the Sabbath-day." If it had not been upon the Sabbath-day, haply there had not been so many eyewitnesses of the power of God. In curing another upon the same day, Christ took occasion to shew the end of the Sabbath, that it was "made for man, and not man for the Sabbathⁱ:" as also to manifest the works of the Sabbath, what they were, and of what nature: to do good upon this day, were it but to a dumb creature, Christ did not disallow: and the Pharisees did not amiss in lifting out an ox or an ass from the ditch upon this day: but how much more was it agreeable unto the sanctifying of the Sabbath, to help a distressed man, and to loose one whom Satan had bound so many years!

For the superstitious observation of the Sabbath which the Jews used, it grew as we may perceive by our Saviour's discourse, with them, from very ignorance of the very first

ⁱ Matt. xii. 8.

institution. It was not said, Thou shalt celebrate the Sabbath with rest; but, Thou shalt sanctify, or thou shalt keep the Sabbath with a holy rest.

Again, to shew that Charity, which is the sum of the Law in general, is to be preferred before any law in particular, for "I will have mercy and not sacrifice^k," saith the Lord, Christ our Saviour, as we see, chiefly aimed at doing good upon the Sabbath-day. Secretly to intervent thy neighbour, or openly to envy a poor man's health, was with the Pharisees no breach of the Sabbath; but to do good upon it, by and by in their ignorant and scrupulous conceit, the Sabbath is broken. For the kindling of fire, but chiefly the gathering of sticks, was it not punished in a very high degree^l? and therefore not the least action to be done in any case, say they, upon the Sabbath-day. These men considered not how the first institution required strictness, which in that instance is manifest for the deterring of others. Contempt is one thing,

k Hosea vi. 6.

l Num. xv. 36.

necessity is another, which Christ shewed was to be considered in excusing His Apostles, when they were murmured at for plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath-day^m. The ignorance of the Pharisees did cleave only to the letter of the Law. Doubtless with great religion did the old Israelites well observe and keep the holy Sabbath of the Lord, which day God Himself sanctified from the beginning : as this day Noah in the “ark rested on the mountains of Araratⁿ ;” as this day the “Israelites were delivered from Egypt^o ;” when they rested from the oppression of Pharaoh ; as this day “the people brought Christ into Jerusalem with palm boughs a little before His Passion^p ;” as this day shewed He “His first miracle at Cana in Galilee^q ;” as this day after all His miracles rested He in the sepulchre, gloriously arising from the dead the day following^r, which day by the constitutions of the Apostles themselves^s, and so authors against whom no exception can be

m Luke vi. 3.

n Gen. viii. 4.

o Exod. xii. 41.

p John xii. 13.

q John ii. 11.

r Matt. xxviii. 1.

s Acts xx. 7.

taken, the Church celebrateth as her Christian Sabbath unto the Lord. This is therefore called by St. John, our "Lord's day^t," from the Resurrection: that which the heathen called *dies Solis*, and dedicated to the sun, we call Sunday, as dedicated to the service of the Son of God.

Concerning the alteration hereof the prophet Hosea might seem to speak when he saith, "I will cause their Sabbaths and feasts to cease^u." "The day of the Lord," saith St. Austin^v, "which we keep as our Sabbath, it is not only a remembrance of His Resurrection past, but a type and figure of that eternal Sabbath which is to come. The alteration, in part, is as thus; they did celebrate their Sabbath with a remembrance of the creation, we of the Resurrection; they as a figure of grace, when they should rest from the servitude of sin, we as a figure of glory, when we shall rest from occasions of sinning.

VI. Eusebius^w sheweth us of certain men,

^t Apoc. i. 10. Κυριακῆ ἡμέρα. ^u Hos. ii. 11. ^v August. de Civlt. Del, lib. xxii. ^w Euseb. lib. iiii. cap. 27.

called Ebionites, which would keep the Sabbath with the Jews, and the Sunday with the Christians, like men who would be of all religions when they are indeed of none. Others tell us of the *Petrobrussiani*, a kind of men which would have no solemn and sanctified feasts to the honour of God at all. The Jews were not so superstitious as these were irreligious. These men are gone, but yet their fancies in some part remain, for the former, to wit, the superstitious manner of the Jews in keeping their Sabbath, we see it refuted by our Saviour, and the right use to be kept how and after what manner.

The question hath been moved, whether the Maccabees did well in violating the Sabbath^x. The question rightly proposed is otherwise: Whether the Maccabees in fighting that day did violate the Sabbath? Many began to wax scrupulous; Mattathias, a good and godly captain, saw it was no time to stand upon points; that now they must either fight it out like men, or be murdered like beasts: to be

x 1 Macc. ii. 34.

hammering upon nice matters of the Law, when the enemies of God were ready to destroy the Law and them, he thought it not good; but to defend themselves, and offend their enemies, which was approved, the case standing as it did.

For the Sabbath-day's journey, which consisted, as some say, of two miles' distance, for that the people placed their tents, or the uttermost parts thereof, so far from the tabernacle, or that mount Olivet was about that distance from Jerusalem, whither the people on that day might repair, the discussing hereof is not so necessary; for the travel of the physicians, or any, in case of necessity, so it be not ordinary upon this day, men need not to be so nice, and indeed Jewishly conceited as they are, if in this they remain opinionated.

In the Christian observation of our Sabbath, to stand upon a number of curious and needless quirks is without judgment and learning, and in part Pharisaical. It were to be wished, that a serious and religious observation thereof

y Acts 1. 12.

were in use, without further frivolous devices of running fanciers. The people upon other days offered a lamb, but upon the Sabbath two lambs were offered, as if on that day our devotion should be doubled^y. Every day would David worship God; yea, and seven times a day would he call upon Him^z. This is the day wherein we should call upon God more than ordinary, a day of prayer and meditation, of reconciling ourselves to God and man, of doing good, and sanctifying a holy time with holy conversation, therefore called the Lord's day, because the Lord should chiefly be worshipped upon this day.

VII. In the second place, for the observation of other festival times and annual solemnities, it hath been shewed that Christ our Saviour went often unto the feasts.

A little before His passion, His Disciples came unto Him, saying, "Master, where wilt Thou that we prepare the Passover^a?" as if they knew it was their Master's manner to keep the feast now approaching. For the

^y Numb. xxviii. 9. ^z Psalm cxix. 164. ^a Matt. xxvi. 17.

feasts of the Jews there is no question, as they were commanded of God, so were they ever solemnly kept of the godly. As they had their feasts, so have Christians theirs. "Christ our Passover is offered for us; therefore," saith the Apostle, "let us keep the feast^b." They had a Passover, and we have a Passover too: they were delivered out of the bondage of Egypt, and we are delivered from a bondage too: they kept a solemn remembrance, and we have as much cause as ever they had to keep a solemn remembrance too. By their feast of firstfruits^c, the fiftieth day after the Passover, they held a holy assembly unto God, we who have received the firstfruits of the Spirit, by the coming down of the Holy Ghost, at the feast of Pentecost upon the Apostles, and consequently upon the whole Church, hold an holy assembly unto the Lord also.

The other of our Christian feasts which concern the chief points of our redemption, as the blessed Birth of Christ, His Circumcision, the Epiphany, and His Resurrection

^b 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

^c Lev. xxiii. 10.

from the dead, have so good use in the Church, as the ancient custom, and Christian manner of the best, and best learned, that have lived since the Apostles' time, as is of more sufficiency to make us continue the godly use thereof, than all that the devisers of novelties are wont to say, to draw us by forced texts to the contrary. Satan is subtle, and never more than when he is changed into an angel of light. To take away a religious remembrance of Him who shed His blood for our redemption; to pass over the memory of His most blessed birth without any solemn observation, were the next way to make both duty and love wax cold in Christians, and by little and little to forget all, and that which we may tremble to think, Christ Jesus and all.

Wherefore we cannot but muse whereunto that strange spirit did tend, which was ready to control every Christian constitution, which eagerly sought the aversion of our solemn and Christian feasts. "These we keep," saith St. Austin^d, "lest unthankfulness or forgetful-

ness should grow upon us ; and therefore a sin is it for men to spend their time, and trouble the quiet of the Church, in seeking to overthrow the Christian use of solemn and seemly observations." " By our feasts," saith Tertullian^e, speaking in the behalf of Christians against the Heathen, " we sanctify unto God the memory of His benefits." Epiphanius^f taxeth Ærius for denying Christian solemnities. They have little in them except boldness which charge us that our ancient rites come within the compass of St. Paul's reprehension, " You observe times and seasons^g:" No, no, there is no such matter, they are far from fatal surmises of constellations, or any other heathenish rites. There is no such fear, God be praised, in our Christian solemnities ; wherefore, unless we see them more strongly refuted than so, that is to say, by a few new names of our feasts, there is no cause but the Church should still continue them in Christian manner, as she doth, and so shall by the grace of God.

Christ our Saviour Himself hath honoured

^e Tertull. ad Phisic.

^f Epiphan. Hom. 72.

^g Gal. iv. 10.

these times by His blessed Birth, His Resurrection, and Ascension up into Heaven : at which times we honour Him, as at all times, so especially when we have feasts consecrated to a commemoration of His goodness towards us, when we in love and pious manner assemble ourselves.

VIII. Sometimes we celebrate the mention of the Martyrs and Saints of God, who have lived in former times ; and this we do for no other end, but only to set before us examples of repentance, of faith, of piety. Besides, occasion is offered of public prayer, which the oftener we frequent, the greater is our devotion. Abuse taken away, we see the keeping of these feasts is a commendable and Christian custom.

IX. For the manner of keeping them : first, these duties of devotion, as prayer, hearing the Word of God, receiving the Sacraments, require our special care ; in these our laud and praise is offered unto God ; and therefore of the learned they are called in the Hebrew *kagei*, times of rejoicing.

Secondarily, at these times we extend, as we may, bounty unto others; and therefore saith St. Austin^h, “ festival times should have liberality, which make many bless God for His benefits.”

Last of all, these solemnities orderly observed, they do sometimes call us away from the inordinate cark and care of the world, and move in our hearts many good and comfortable thoughts, in calling to mind the time will come, “ when we shall keep the Feast of feasts in Heaven.”

CHAPTER XXV.

What we learn by Christ His weeping
over Jerusalem.

THAT it fared not with the Son of God here on earth, as it did with king Solomon, who spent his time in great royalty in the worldⁱ, or as it is said of Aristoxenus the philosopher, who led all his life amidst in-

n Aug. in Adv. Dom.

i 2 Chron. ix. 9.

struments of music : we all know it fared far otherwise with Him, who did seldom laugh in the world, and the world again did as seldom laugh upon Him. St. Luke tells us of His sad journey towards Jerusalem, how He passed the way weeping^k, and what small delight He took in the people's "hosanna," or all the troop at that time about Him ; for, as it is mentioned, while they were singing, He was mourning. Christ was not moved with that which was without ; but respects that which was within : the wickedness of Jerusalem makes Him to weep. He wept for them which would not weep for themselves. David saith, " Mine eyes gush out with water, because men keep not Thy law." Christ's eyes gushed out with watery tears, because they would not " know the day of their visitation^l : " nay, they would not accept His love. He saw the city, and foresaw the ruin and misery thereof. The women of Jerusalem wept when they saw the calamity of Christ : Christ here weepeth for the calamity of Jerusalem

k Luke xix. 41.

l Luke xix. 44.

to come : and thus He doth not so much by words as by tears shew His sorrow for the sins of the city ; and weeping words also are not wanting, “ O, if thou hadst known,” &c.

II. The Prophets of old have sometimes spoken unto the sons of men by sorrowful signs, as well as by sayings. Samuel, when he would manifest how Saul’s kingdom should be rent from him, having the lap of his coat in his hand, he rent it in the midst^m. Ezekiel, to shew the destruction of the people, takes a brick stone, and lays it before them, and pourtrays upon it the city, and layeth siege against itⁿ.

Christ at this time spake little, but His tears prophesied great sorrow to come : He came near the city, not so much in motion as in commiseration. David wept for Absalom, saying, “ O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom ! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son^o !” Christ did as much mourn for Jerusalem as ever David did for Absalom : Jerusalem, Jerusalem, I would

m 1 Sam. xv. 27.

n Ezek. iv. 1.

o 2 Sam. xviii. 33.

to God I had died for thee! Know, Jerusalem, I am now going to die for thee: O what should I do unto thee that I have not done, except dying!

Many a time came Christ towards Jerusalem, but He never came weeping as now He did, because Jerusalem was never so near desolation and ruin, as now it was; and therefore Christ never sorrowed more for it than now He did.

Was this weeping for the overthrow of the walls and goodly buildings of Jerusalem? No, it was for the sins of Jerusalem, which should be the cause of Jerusalem's desolation. What affection was here in the eternal Son of God, to weep for sinful men! even then was He weeping, when they were most rejoicing and laughing.

The physician most weeps when the frantick patient is or seems to be most merry, because he knows then the danger is greatest, and therefore gives over to administer physic any more, leaving him to be lamented of his good friends.

III. "O that thou hadst known in this thy

day those things that belong unto thy peace !” Which words were weeping words, as I said, and uttered with an interrupted voice, and as it were for very sorrow, breaking off in the midst by a manner of speech called *aposiopesis*, when there was something more to be spoken, but very sorrow hinders Him for making a perfect sentence. I weep, but O Jerusalem, which art now rejoicing, and oughtest to have tears to prevent tears, if thou didst know the things which do belong unto thy peace, thou wouldest as well weep for thyself as I do weep for thee. Thou hast had a day of peace, but there is a day coming full of sorrow and persecution. O Jerusalem, because thou wouldest not accept the one, thou art like shortly to rue the misery of the other. In this, Christ lamented their forgetfulness of their estate : in prosperity men remember not what is to come afterwards.

And thus hear we a mournful physician weeping for his wilful patient, which would not be healed nor receive help though it were offered with tears.

IV. The most doleful desolation that came upon this city^p about forty years after, Jerusalem having yet forty years' space to repent; the most doleful desolation, I say, that came upon this city, so mighty in prowess, so glorious in fame, so rich in all abundance, is set forth by those who have mentioned the tragical end which befell the same. The beholding thereof made Eleazar, one of the inhabitants at the very time, to break out into this or the like mournful oration: O Jerusalem, thou great and goodly city of the world, where is now the beauty of Sion, "the joy of the whole earth?" where is thy glory, where is thy magnificence, O Jerusalem? where is that *Sanctum Sanctorum*? where are thy Priests, who were attendant upon God as Angels? where are thy sages, thy young men? O from what glory art thou fallen, to what reproach and infamy! O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! who can read with dry eyes the most woful end of this city and people? They refused the Father and the Son, and God sent

Titus and Vespasian, the father and son, that never left them until they were utterly defaced. O Jerusalem, strongly did thy enemies besiege thee, but thy sins did more strongly assault thee! They sold the Saviour of the world for thirty pence, and what followed in the captivity? thirty Jews were sold for a penny. The Lord Jesus was apprehended upon mount Olivet, and upon mount Olivet was Jerusalem first besieged. The Lord Jesus was crucified at the Passover, and at the Passover was all Jewry, as it were, shut up in a prison, Jerusalem sacked, and in such sort, as the Romans themselves confessed, saying, That unless this people had offended the God of Heaven, they could never have prevailed against them as they did. An eleven hundred thousand, saith the history^q, changed life with death, and that within the circuit of a short time.

Thus have we heard of Christ His weeping over Jerusalem, and the cause which moved Him to weep, by which, without further application, we may consider, as St. Gregory

^q Josephus.

saith, that their destruction is our admonition. If the natural branches were cut off, then may the wild fear. When Scipio saw Carthage burn, he wept : being asked the reason, " For that, saith he, I know not what shall become of Rome." The destruction of Jerusalem is like a thunderclap in which one is stricken, but many hear the noise, which may make them to fear.

V. For three causes did Christ our Saviour weep, and at three several times : first, Christ wept, that we should have by so much the more our hope and confidence in Him, when we see Him weeping for us ; which proceeded of mere compassion : secondarily, Christ wept, to teach us to weep and bewail our own misery and our own sins, as He did for the misery and sins of others : thirdly, He wept, to shew us when we should weep, even then when we think ourselves in greatest security.

At three times also did He weep : first, in raising Lazarus, there He bewailed man's misery : secondly, as at this time, over Jerusalem, here He bewailed man's security :

thirdly, upon the cross, there He bewailed man's infirmity. If our Saviour Christ were seen to weep in the presence of others, we may easily conceive that secretly in the days of His flesh He often "offered up groans," as the Apostle speaketh, with "strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to deliver Him^r."

VI. Now what may we learn by this weeping love of Christ, Who of charity wept for my sins and for thy sins? Shall we see, saith Cassiodor, the prince himself weeping, and we in the meanwhile solace ourselves in pleasure and vain sporting? Is he a good child, that beholding his father sit in sackcloth and ashes, will stand by laughing and sporting, as nothing moved? Shall the Son of God weep for thy sins, and wilt thou delight thyself in vain mirth? O Christian soul, mourn a little. When the house is on fire, we bring water; when the soul is inflamed with unlawful desires, we bring the tears of repentance. Call to mind that doctrine of Christ, "Blessed are they that mourn:" harsh doctrine, but sweet-

ened with a blessing. It was the prayer of St. Austin^t, “O God, give me the grace of tears.” And there is in godly minds, saith St. Ambrose, a certain delight to weep; a delight of weeping. Once God opened the windows of heaven to drown a world of sinners; the godly often open the windows of the body to drown in themselves a world of sin.

“The unwise make but a sport of sin^u,” saith Solomon, their heart is as a barren land, where all remembrance of God is forgotten; but the wise man is conversant in the house of mourning. Pharaoh and his host were drowned in the sea^v, as sin and the works of sin are in the tears of repentance. Those who were diseased, found cure in the troubled pool^w. We lost our felicity by delightful eating, and we recover ourselves by mournful chastening.

“There is,” saith the Wise Man, “a time to rejoice and a time to mourn^x.” Many take their time of rejoicing, but cannot hit upon

^t In Med.

^u Prov. xiv. 9.

^v Exod. xiv. 28.

^w John v. 4.

^x Eccles. iii. 4.

the time of mourning. "O that we did know, at the least in this our day, those things that do belong unto our peace;" better is it to mourn here than hereafter. When we are moved to mournful passions, let us remember with how small pomp and pleasure Christ passed His time in the world, Who passed it in often weeping. The two kine carrying the ark, they lowed all the way as they went, and yet never stayed until they came to the place appointed^y. We go on weeping in this vale of tears, but yet keep on the way still, until we come unto our journey's end, and then an end of weeping. Here as in "Ramah, a voice is heard of weeping and mourning^z," hereafter they shall have "all tears wiped from their eyes^a." The prophet Ezekiel, when he came to see the glory of the Lord in the sanctuary, was brought about by the north^b: we pass along by many sorrows, and then come to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

y 1 Sam. vi. 12.

a Isai. xxv. 8.

z Jer. xxx. 15.

b Ezek. xlv. 4.

Of mournful events, how the godly take them, Jeremiah saith, " This is my sorrow, and I will bear it ;" and Eli said, " It is the Lord, let Him do as it seemeth good unto Him : " because he that now goeth forth weeping, shall one day return, saith the Prophet David, and bring his sheaves with him : those that for a time do mourn with Christ, the time will come when they shall rejoyce with Him.

CHAPTER XXVI.

That Christians ought often to meditate of our Saviour Christ His Passion, and how this doth serve for the comfort of our faith, and also for the instruction of our lives.

WHEN some great prince intendeth to encounter his enemies, first come the heralds and trumpeters before him, then comes his standard-bearer, and then he himself comes in person. So was it with our Lord and Saviour, first He sent the Patriarchs His heralds, then the Pro-

phets His trumpeters, then came John the Baptist His standardbearer, who is stricken down dead before Him. Did this dismay Him? No, for all this He goeth on constantly, and with resolution to die in the battle, touching Whose victorious death, let us now enter into some meditation, and hence learn to live to Him who died for us miserable sinners. Although in meditating upon the holy virtues of Christ our Saviour, which worthily require our most devotional consideration, we are much moved, I doubt it not, yet when we begin to call to mind His Passion, that ocean sea of all goodness, then ought we to be even carried away from ourselves by admiring His wonders towards us. And here it may be said to devout souls, as it was to the Disciples in the garden, "sit ye here^c." Let us not say unto Christ with the Jews, Come down from the cross; but let us fasten ourselves to His cross by godly meditation.

II. And now to make an entrance hereunto :

c Matt. xxvi. 36.

“ Christ loved us,” saith the Apostle, “ and gave Himself a sweet smelling sacrifice and oblation unto God^d,” wherein we may consider these three things. First, the moving cause, to wit, love ; “ Christ loved us.” Secondly, the offering which this love caused Him to offer, “ He gave Himself.” Thirdly, the end why he gave this offering, “ that He might be a reconciliation for man with God the Father.” For the first, to wit, love, the moving cause of all ; if a mother love her child because she bought it with pain, never mother bought her son with so great pain as Christ bought us : what greater love is there than for one to give his life for his friend ? Yet greater was Thy love, O holy Son of God, Who gavest Thy life for us that were Thine enemies. Doubtless, saith the Apostle, “ one will scarce die for a righteous man,” and yet One is found to die for us that were unrighteous, and then too when it was in His power to die or not to die. These things may be considered that His love that loved

^d Ephes. v. 2.

sinner, that is the love of the Son of God, may incite our affection to Him ; He that had not sins of His own suffered for the sins of others.

“The greatest perfection and force of love,” say the philosophers, “is the force unitive, and this was never in any so forcible as in Christ, when He would unite unto Himself His Church or Congregation ; which accordeth with that of the Holy Ghost, ‘ Let a man so love his wife as Christ loved the Congregation^d :’ the wife is chargeable, but far more chargeable was the Church to the Son of God.”

III. As for the offering, it was Himself ; Aaron and all his sons never made such an offering as this was. He gave Himself a sacrifice, and in a sacrifice there are considered four things : first, *quis offert*, “ who it is that offers ;” secondly, *quid offertur*, “ what is offered ;” thirdly, *cui offertur*, “ to whom it is offered ;” fourthly, *quare offertur*, “ wherefore it is offered.” The *quis offert* is Christ, the *quid offertur* is Himself ; Christ offered Himself :

d Ephes. v. 25.

the *cui* to God : *pro quibus*, for whom ? for us wretched sinners. Why, was there nothing in Heaven or earth that could have been offered else ? Was there no other sacrifice to be had but innocent Isaac ? Must none be approved to make a reconciliation for man, but the Son of man ? Was sin then so heinous that nothing could cleanse the contagion thereof but the death of an innocent lamb ? Stand and hear a little, O sinful man, thy Saviour Himself speaking unto thee. For thy sake do I suffer all this : for thy sake do I offer Myself, as thou seest, a sacrifice upon the cross : all this do I do for the love of thee ; thy sins are the thorns that pierced My head, the spear that opened My side : thy delicates was the vinegar and gall that I drank ; thy liberty and looseness was the nails that fastened Me to the cross : see whither thy sins, thy vanities, O man, have brought Me ! Behold Me suffering for thee, to reconcile thee unto My Father. Doth He not by this, O Christian man, inflame thee with His love, strengthen thee with His merit, and comfort thy sorrowful heart with

His abundant mercy? If He were punished for us, then were we punishable of ourselves.

When now justice had taken place, for rather than sin should be unpunished, God would punish it in His own Son, when His just wrath began to wax fiercer and fiercer amongst the rest of the people, Aaron makes speed, takes the censer in his hand, puts on incense, and goes quickly unto the congregation to make an atonement for them^e. This atonement hath our Aaron made for us all when He offered no other offering than Himself.

IV. What hath man more to offer or to give than his goods, his honour, and his life? All this hath Christ offered and given for us: His goods, when He left His kingdom in Heaven: His honour, when He was reproached of men: His life, when He yielded up the same for us upon the altar of the cross. But how many indignities did He suffer before He came to the accomplishment hereof, when as like a meek lamb He was carried and recarried from

^e Numb. xvi. 47.

judgment to judgment, when He was mocked and scorned of all sorts !

In His suffering itself, we may consider amongst whom, where, and when He suffered : amongst whom ? Even His own people : so Pilate said, “ Thine own nation hath delivered Thee unto me^f.” When ? At the festival solemnity, when others were rejoicing He was suffering. Where ? At Jerusalem, the king’s city, and there without the gate of the same city, in a place called Calvary, where thieves and murderers were wont to suffer. “ O all you that pass by, behold and see if there was ever sorrow like My sorrow^g !” From the hour wherein He was sought for, and taken by torch-light and lanterns, until the sixth hour of His crucifying, that He gave up the Ghost : one betrayeth Him, another apprehends Him ; one binds Him, another leads Him bound from Pilate to Herod, from Herod to Pilate again : one seeketh false witness against Him, another crieth out upon Him, He is not worthy to live : one scourgeth

^f John xviii. 35.

^g Lam. i. 12.

Him, another strikes Him on the face: one clotheth Him with purple, another putteth a crown of thorns upon His head, a third gives Him a reed, mocking Him: so they never let Him rest until they have no more to do with Him.

V. When we have seen the manner of His suffering, let us consider how great He was that suffered: even He it was to Whom power over all things in Heaven and earth was given^h. He, before Whom the twenty-four elders fall down: He, Whose countenance John a little after beheld to shine as the sun in his strength, when he saw Him and fell at His feet as dead, hearing a voice; "Fear not; I am the first and the last: and I am alive, but was dead, and am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and deathⁱ:" and thus of the *quis passus est*, "Who it was that suffered."

VI. Now for whom suffered He all this? Even for none other than sinful men; for Christ suffered in the place of sinners, and with sinners, to shew that He suffered for

^h Matt. xxviii. 18.

ⁱ Rev. i. 17, 18.

sinners. Learn, O man, to hate sin, which was so heinous : and as often as thou art at leisure, to meditate of the Passion of Jesus Christ the Son of God, which thou shouldest daily do ; for it is better, saith one, than thy fasting with bread and water : so often, I say, as thou dost meditate of His Passion, call to mind, as the greatness of thy sins, so also the greatness of His love, Who died for thy sins, that as in the one thou mayest bewail thy own wickedness, so in the other thou mayest acknowledge His bounty and mercy towards thee, with that of the Prophet, “ Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin^k.”

But of whom suffered He all this injury ? Even of His own kindred and acquaintance, the people of the Jews. After all His miracles and works of mercy done amongst them, in curing their sick, cleansing their lepers, and healing all that came unto Him ; after His feeding so many hungry people in the wilderness, teaching so many the way to salvation

that came to hear Him, now they rewarded His pains and travail with opprobrious contumelies, His unspeakable mercy with bitter hatred, never leaving Him until they bring Him to the death of the cross. Thus He suffered, not of strangers and foreigners, but of His own neighbours; yea, His own brethren, as Himself calleth them, whom He calleth children to God¹.

VIII. Four things there are which we should meditate upon concerning the Passion of our Saviour Christ.

First, for imitation; calling to mind His patient suffering, we should not abhor suffering, or murmur against tribulations, seeing He suffered so great things as He did, for the members ought to conform themselves to their Head.

Secondarily, for compassion; we ought to consider with grief of mind that our sins were the cause of all this, and therefore we should truly repent us of them, and true repentance appeareth in the reformation of life.

¹ Matt. xv. 26.

Thirdly, for admiration, when we call to mind, Who, for whom, and what He suffered.

Fourthly, for resolution, that is, "to give our bodies," as the Apostle speaketh, "a sacrifice to serve Him, Who hath given Himself a sacrifice to save us; and so we have by His Passion, imitation to direct, compassion to unite, admiration to stir up, resolution to perfect our Christian love and duty towards Him.

To go forward and to leave all the indignities offered Him in the judgment-hall, His scourging, crowning with thorns, buffeting, spitting upon, bearing His cross, and the like: now the greedy soldiers begin to spoil Him of His garments, exposing His Sacred Body all naked unto the sharp and cold air, which cruelty was not wont to be offered, but to abject persons. Then begin they to fasten Him to the cross, racking and straining His hands and feet further than naturally they would extend: so cruelly are all parts of His Body stretched, that the beholders might tell

His bones, according to that, "they told all My bones^m." Here is He fastened unto the cross with nails at the hands and feet, "they digged My hands and feet." Inexplicable was this suffering, the nails piercing those places where the sinews meet together, the poize of His Body every moment increasing the pain. Now they offered Him vinegar mingled with gall, according to that, "They gave Me gall to eat, and vinegar to drink." Oh how mildly did He suffer all this! How should we be content to leave earthly things, seeing Him stripped and spoiled of His clothing! how should we crucify the flesh, and the concupiscence thereof, when we remember His spare flesh to be fastened to the cross! See we here Abel killed of His brother; the serpent lifted up to heal all that were stung. "O most loving Saviour," saith St. Austinⁿ, "that which the sinner deserveth, the innocent suffereth." "Remember, O Christian soul," saith Anselme in his Meditations, "that thou wert a captive, but thou art freed: that thou were banished,

^m Psalm xxii. 16, 17.

ⁿ August. Med. 7.

but art brought home ; that thou wert lost, but art restored ; that thou wert dead, but art alive. It was a mercy that thou wert His work, but it is a greater mercy thou art His price : it was much to take Adam from the earth, and bring him to the joys of Paradise : but it was more to take man from the pit of destruction, and bring him to the joys of Heaven. To proceed.

X. A superscription is written by Pilate upon the cross, “ Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews^o.” Pilate, although ignorant, commended Christ in this superscription in three things. First, for the remission of sins, in that he wrote, “ Jesus.” Secondly, for the bestowing of grace, in that he said, “ of Nazareth.” Thirdly, for His power, in that he called Him “ King of the Jews :” and this is written in three tongues, for that of all sorts coming unto the feast, every tongue might confess Jesus the Son of God.

It is written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin ; in Hebrew, for the Jews, who gloried in the

Law ; in Greek, for the Grecians, who gloried in wisdom ; and in Latin, for the Romans, who most gloried in dominion and power : as if Pilate should have said ; This is the King of all religion, having reference to the Hebrews ; of all wisdom, having reference to the Greeks ; of all power, having reference to the Romans.

“ And these three sorts,” saith St. Austin, “ may challenge unto them the dignity of the cross, to wit, all devout and religious, rich or poor, signified by the Hebrews ; all wise, who are noted by the Greeks ; all mighty, who are resembled by the Latins. So then, the religion, the wisdom, the power of the world, confess Christ their King, Jews and Gentiles.”

XI. And this triumphant title or superscription is written in His death to shew that for all His suffering death, He lost not His kingdom. The Jews saw it to their shame, and therefore would have had it altered, which Pilate refused, saying, “ That which I have written, I have written P : ” it is true, I will not

alter it : and Pilate in the end found it true indeed, to the terror of his wretched conscience, who having heard of the soldiers the verity of the Resurrection, lived in continual anguish, until at last, after disgrace received of the Romans, he came to a desperate end by casting himself away, as histories mention.

XII. While this was doing they did not spare to reproach Him, and this was done by many : first, by them that sat by and watched Him ; secondarily, by some of the high-priests that came to mock Him ; thirdly, by those that passed by, and wagged their heads at Him ; fourthly, by one of the thieves that was crucified with Him. St. Matthew saith, they “ reviled Him^q :” St. Luke mentioneth one only. “ It seemeth,” saith St. Austin, “ that both of them began to revile Him, of which St. Matthew speaketh ; but one perceiving the heavens troubled, and other signs, moved with remorse desisted, and then only one of them, according to St. Luke, reviled Him^r.”

q Matt. xxvii. 44.

r Luke xxiii. 39, 40.

XIII. Now they begin to repeat the words of the false witnesses: "Thou couldest build the temple if it were destroyed^s— If Thou be the Son of God, save Thyself^t." "No," saith Bede, "if Thou be the Son of God?" nay, because He was the elected of God, He would not come down, for therefore came He into the world. Believe ye Him rising from the sepulchre, which is more than descending from the cross.

The other malefactor saith unto Him, "Remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." What kingdom was this? Surely no temporal kingdom: "in Thy kingdom," that is, a better kingdom than any kingdom here beneath, or that which Tiberius now enjoyeth.

Great was the faith of this thief: for neither the fear of the Jews now present, nor the sharpness of his own pain, the blasphemy of his fellow, the flight of the Disciples, the apparent infirmity of Christ's flesh, made him any way to waver, but first he acknowledgeth Christ to be a Lord; secondly, he prayeth to

^s Matt. xxvii. 40.

^t Mark xv. 29, 30.

Him, and therefore he acknowledgeth Him to be of power ; thirdly, he acknowledgeth Him to have a kingdom. This thief could help himself but in two things, his heart and his tongue, which he doth ; with his heart he believeth, with his tongue he maketh confession of Christ his Saviour.

XIV. And now behold we our Redeemer yielding up His life for the sins of the world. Let us consider awhile His seven last words uttered upon the cross, which by some are divided into eight. Two of these He spake for sinners : “ Father, forgive them ; ” and, “ Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.” Two for the godly : “ Woman, behold thy Son ; ” and to the same Disciple, “ Behold thy Mother.” Two for the world : “ I thirst : It is finished.” Two for Himself : “ My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? ” and, “ Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.”

XV. The first of these was spoken in the act of His crucifying ; when framing Himself unto the cross, He saith, “ Father, forgive

them, they know not what they do:" good to Me, but hurt to themselves: and so it is with them that hurt others, they know not what punishment they bring to themselves, and what crown and garland to them whom they think they most hurt: "They know not what they do." He prayeth not so much for them who did know, or ought to have known Him to be the true Messias, as for the lay and illiterate people, who of a blind zeal did they knew not what. What greater miracle than this loving prayer. Here was a word of all patience and piety, full of love and unspeakable sweetness. They say, "His blood be upon us," and He prays that it be not upon them, "Father, forgive them:" even now pierced with nails, crowned with thorns, laden with scoffs and reproaches, and yet here amongst all, a "Father, forgive them." And it was not without a mystery that He said, "Father, forgive them." By all this we learn to bear the greatest injuries of the world, and to pray withal for our very enemies. What should dust and ashes take upon it to revenge,

when the Lord of Heaven and earth so meekly endureth all! What did the world ever see more patient, more charitable than the Son of God! "Father, forgive them;" pitying those that persecuted Him.

XVI. The second word was spoken to the penitent thief, "Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise;" which we understand not to be spoken of that earthly Paradise, from which Adam was expelled, but of that imperial place whither St. Paul was taken up, where the Saints and Angels are above in glory. By this saying comfort is given to them that repent them of their sins, and call for mercy upon Christ crucified. Behold how bountiful Christ is! He gives a thief Paradise, that doth but ask it of Him. Here one worthy of punishment, and worthy to suffer death by his own confession, receiveth mercy at the last instant. But yet no man ought by this example, of set purpose to defer his conversion unto the last; the privilege of a few, much less of one, doth not infer a common law for all. Christ here gives mercy unto a thief, and

unto a thief at the last cast, to shew there is no place left for desperation : one example makes us bold, one finds mercy at the last, that none should despair ; and but one, that many should not presume. But see the faith of this thief that findeth mercy : a Disciple denieth his Master, this thief acknowledgeth Him^u : he seeth Christ hanging upon the cross as a man, and yet he prayeth unto Him as God : he accuseth his own defaults, reproveth the blasphemy of his fellow, he acknowledgeth Christ's innocency : the Jews that know the Law, crucify Him ; he seeth Him in all contempt, and yet he confesseth Him a Lord, a King. He beholds Him suffering death, and yet he makes request unto Him as the giver of life : they who had before seen Him raising the dead, waver : this man dying with Him, acknowledgeth the Resurrection. "What fruit," saith St. Austin, "did Christ here reap of a dry tree ? Let any sinner shew this man's faith, and we dare shew the remission of his sins : he had before stolen

^u Euseb. Emiss. de Beat. Latron.

earthly things, but now steals Heaven. O admirable conversion ! that which we should take example of is an example of comfort, of mercy, of hope, of forgiveness, of confessing our sins, and with steadfast faithfulness of acknowledging the Son of God, and craving mercy to be remembered of Him in His kingdom. Last of all, so to live, that in the hour of death we may hear that said unto us by Christ, " This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

XVII. The third word was, when He said unto His blessed Mother, " Woman, behold thy Son ;" and to consider these two together, He said unto the same Disciple, " Behold thy Mother !" as if He should say unto the blessed Virgin, hitherto have I obeyed thee, and cared for thee as a Son, from henceforth in My stead I will leave thee a Disciple. Unto the Disciple John He saith, as it were, Thou hast done Me service as a good servant, now do it where I will thee ; behold her to whom thou shalt perform obedience and care, as the son to his mother. " And thus Christ, a Virgin," saith St. Jerome, " commits His Virgin

Mother to a virgin Disciple^v." This third word is a word of pity and care; for to see Him now in such dolours and pains to take care for His Mother, was a token of much love, whereby He sheweth us to help our parents and do them good what in the world we can. But what a change doth the blessed Virgin make, who hath for the Lord, the servant: for the Master, the man: for the Son of God, a son of Zebedee? This change could not but grieve her, and pierce, as Simeon had before said, her very heart^w. "Woman, behold thy son;" not naming her mother, which very name mother, might have increased her grief, beholding the Passion and departure of so dear a Son, and might move her motherly mind to more and more sorrow. The Son crucified above, the mother mourning beneath; His wounds wounded her heart, His piercing was her piercing, every stroke of the nail struck through her breast: all this while not a word is mentioned; weeping would not suffer her to speak, who at any occasion spake seldom;

^v Hieron. con. Jovinian.

^w Luke ii. 35.

the longest speech she used, that we read of, was her "Magnificat," her devotional speech to God.

On the other side, O loving disciple, beloved of the Lord of love, thou art now left for a time, but never cease to mention love, or write of love! Jonathan and David, Jacob and Benjamin, wept at parting, and so may you it followeth.

XVIII. From the sixth hour there was darkness unto the ninth, the Sun of righteousness suffereth eclipse, the visible sun, or the most clear light of the world hideth his beams, as not able to behold the Lord of Heaven and earth suffering: all creatures seem to suffer with Him, the earth trembleth, the heavens are all in black, as in mourning manner. The graves open, the rocks or stones cleave asunder, the whole frame of nature is disquieted, when as now the God of nature suffered. What a solemn and doleful time was this! some strike their breasts, others stand wondering. The Centurion saith, as it were lifting up his hands to Heaven, "Surely this was the Son of God!"

XIX. The fourth word was about the ninth hour, when He cried, "Eli, Eli, lama sabac-thani? My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" which for that He spake in the Hebrew, some standing by and hearing this, said, "He calleth for Elias." These, according to St. Jerome, were the Roman soldiers, who understood not the Hebrew, or peradventure some of the Jews themselves, who by reason of the noise, could not well discern what was spoken. The doubling of the voice sheweth His double nature; His Deity spake not this, which was impassible. Like as the Sun shining upon the wood, the axe cutteth the wood, but the Sun remaineth inviolable. His humanity spake this, which suffered and spake at this time as human nature is wont to speak when it thinks itself forsaken: not that the Son of God was any way doubtful of Divine assistance, but to shew how truly He bare upon Him man's infirmity, sin only excepted, which thinks itself forsaken in times of grief. Here we are moved to suffer with Christ, beholding insensible creatures them-

selves to suffer with Him. St. Ambrose saith, " He sorrowed for me Who had nothing for Himself to sorrow. Rational affection cried, " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ?" Sensitive affliction cried the same : and yet in Christ a voice not of the least diffidence, or so much of complaint as of admiration. Behold, O man, what I suffer for thee ! behold the punishments wherewith I am afflicted ! and when thou beholdest the outward man, think also that the inward man is partaker of the sorrow and suffering wherewith I am pierced, finding the ungratefulness of thee towards Me, suffering for thy sins.

Here we learn in times of extremity to offer unto God our sorrowful sighs and supplications ; and though we seem to the eye of the world to be forsaken, yet we may take comfort in His mercy, " who is near unto all them that call upon Him," as the Prophet speaketh : yea then, when they pour out faithfully their complaints before Him.

XX. The fifth word was, when Jesus knew that all things were now accomplishing which

were spoken of Him, this remained, "They gave Me vinegar to drink:" He saith, "I thirst; that the Scripture might be fulfilled which was written of Him, They gave Me vinegar to drink^x." When it is said, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled," we do not understand this causatively, but consequently, as the schoolmen speak: for Christ did not this therefore, because the Scripture had spoken it, but therefore the Scripture spoke it, because Christ in time should do it. When He saith, "I thirst," what was this thirst? Natural, caused by the emanation of His blood, together with the extremities of His sorrows; which in part also is true, for His blood exhausted, extremity of thirst followed: but there was withal in Christ a thirst supernatural; and this thirst was the salvation of souls wherewith He laboured, as with a most vehement thirst or desire. This thirst of Christ was our health, our joy; "O good Jesus," saith St. Bernard, "Thy thirst was my salvation."

XXI. And here somewhat is added to His suffering ; for when these men had hurt Him so much, that they could almost hurt Him no longer, they give Him sour wine upon a bunch of hyssop, and bitter herbs mixed with myrrh and gall, such as they had given Him to drink, before His lifting up to the cross : here they deny that unto the Son of God, which they were wont to grant to the greatest malefactors, giving them at these times wine to drink ; but Christ hath no other but vinegar and gall. Behold what a supper they gave our Lord, for it was now supper-time ; here was the banquet ; our sins gave Him gall to eat and vinegar to drink. O miserable men that we are to seek delicates ! Here are we taught to drink with Christ the wine of devotion mixed with myrrh, the mortification of the flesh ; and gall, the compunction of the spirit. On the other side, we must take heed that we give not Christ thirsting for our salvation, vinegar mixed with gall, as these men did, that is, an evil and sinful life, which is vinegar mixed with the gall of scandalous conversation.

XXII. The sixth word was when He said, "It is finished;" that is, All whatsoever was spoken of My suffering is now complete; the honour of My Father, the good of the faithful, all that I should do concerning My obedience to His will, who gave Me this work to accomplish. "It is finished:" nothing remaineth in this suffering, but My dying, and now I die. This our Saviour spake, as having fought a good fight, and finished His course: this He spake as one having undertaken a journey, and now gone through many passages, at His journey's end He saith, "It is finished:" first, lifting up His eyes to Heaven, "Father, Thy will:" then beholding men upon the earth, faithful men, your health: then, respecting the breaking of the serpent's head, Satan, the vanquishing of thy power: "It is finished." O happy voice of the Son of God!

XXIII. The seventh word was, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." St. Luke saith, that He cried this with a loud voice. Some of the ancient Fathers think our Saviour was now meditating upon the one and

thirtieth Psalm; and coming unto those words in the Psalm, He uttered them with an audible voice, "Into Thy hands I commend My Spirit," and so gave up the ghost. This was now the ninth hour of the day, when the sun was darkened, the earth shook, the graves opened, as the Evangelists shew. At this hour Adam sinned: the same hour of the day wherein Adam sinned, Christ died: by dying, Christ opened the gate of Paradise, which Adam by sinning had shut up against him and His. Adam in the garden lost his life, and Christ in the garden restored life, when He yielded Himself with these words unto His Father, "Into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." These words being uttered, He gave up the ghost, His eyes closed, His countenance pale, His head bended down: Heaven nor earth ever saw such a sight, the God of life, the Author of life, and Life itself becomes dead.

In this word we may consider many things; as first, that our departing souls should be commended into the hands of our heavenly

Father : secondarily, somewhat we have here for the strengthening of our faith, Christ bending down His head, uttered these words, not of constraint, but voluntarily : whoever lay down to sleep so peaceably as Christ did, when He gave up the ghost ? men when they are dying, are scarce able to breathe : at this time Christ speaketh with a loud voice, " Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." We see what Christ's example doth teach us to do, in commending our departing souls into the hands of God ; how at the hour of His death He prayed, He wept, and spake unto His heavenly Father.

And here also may the Christian man enter into a large field of meditation upon many things together. We were more insensible than the senseless creatures, if we should not be moved with the Passion of our Lord, Whose death was our life : consider we how great things the Son of God hath done for us, and suffered for our Redemption : consider we how great things they were which He suffered : how great His sorrows were which

shewed the greatness of His love : how great His injuries were, when He was falsely accused, mocked, spitted upon, buffeted, whipped, crowned with thorns, bereft of His clothes, burdened with His cross, pierced with nails, lanced with a spear, and so died.

When “ Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph whom you sold into Egypt,” they were so astonished they had not a word to say^x. When Christ shall say, “ I am your brother, I am He Whom ye crucified,” how shall they be confounded that crucified Him ! But what joy shall they have who believe on Him ! Up, O Christian soul, and with the dove make thy nest in the holes of this rock ! Behold the wounds of thy Saviour ! Come to this ark, whither all creatures repair to save themselves. Stand and behold a little with the devout women, the Body of thy Saviour upon the cross, see Him afflicted from top to toe : see Him wounded in the head to heal our vain imaginations : see Him wounded in the hands to heal our evil actions : see Him wounded in

x Gen. xlv. 3.

the heart to cure our vain thoughts : see His eyes shut up which did enlighten the world ; see them shut, that thy eyes might be turned away from beholding vanity : see those ears which were wont to hear the joyful hymn of the Cherubims, " Holy, Holy, Holy," now have heard a multitude of reproaches : see that countenance which was goodly to look upon, is spitted upon and buffeted. The blood of Abel cried Justice ! justice ! but the blood of Christ cried Mercy ! mercy ! O that we had hearts to meditate of the Passion of our Lord ! And three things there are that do offer themselves in this place to our best disposed meditation, justice in God, sin in man, love in Christ. There is nothing of which we ought more to think, more to speak, more to read, or more to meditate, than of this ; because the remembrance hereof appertaineth to the salvation of our souls, increaseth faith, driveth away despair, giveth fortitude against the afflictions of the world, strengtheneth us against temptations, filleth the mind with joy,

y Isaiah vi. 3.

causeth a loathing of sin, and after a wonderful manner stirreth us all up to devotion. This our Saviour Christ Himself well thought upon, when He left so high a Sacrament so full of heavenly Mysteries, for the continual renewing in our hearts of this His most Blessed Passion. O sweet Jesus, should ever unthankfulness of this love of Thine creep upon us, should not Thy precious blood soften our adamant hearts, Who hast delivered us from infinite miseries, purchased by Thy death? O infinite goodness, and freely offered! Thyself hast offered Thyself unto Thy Father, a sacrifice for our sins: there is no burden heavier than sin, this hast Thou eased us of. O blessed Son of God, "while I live," saith the Prophet, "will I call upon the Lord, yea, as long as I have being." We will offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and praise His name for ever and ever.

And thus we meditate of the Passion of our Lord, Who suffered death to overcome death: of which St. Austin^z mentioneth a double

^z Serm. de Nat. iii. et in Ps. xxxiv.

cause; the one, that Christ died for us to deliver us; the other, that those whom He redeemed by His death He might teach, and by His example instruct: why did the Head suffer but to give the body an example? Christ humbled Himself unto death, even unto the death of the cross: we ought also to humble ourselves, to be crucified unto the world, and the world ought to be crucified to us: unto Him were our sins imputed, unto us His righteousness: He gave Himself a sacrifice to save us, and we give ourselves a sacrifice to serve Him.

Let us go with the Blessed Virgin to Mount Calvary, and stand by awhile, beholding in mournful manner what is done: and when we have beheld until they have done crucifying the Son of God, then with Joseph and Nicodemus let us take down and anoint His crucified Body, with the sweetest perfumes of prayer and praise our hearts can yield, putting it in the new sepulchre of our holiest meditation. Of them who thus do, it may be said, as David said to those who brought him word they had honourably buried their master,

Saul, "blessed are you of the Lord; the Lord recompense you this mercy^z." The Lord recompense them this devotion that thus do, and blessed be they of the Lord, who thus reverence the Lord of lords.

CHAPTER XXVII.

How Christ's Resurrection from the dead, doth much strengthen our Christian faith, and serve also for the instruction of our Christian lives.

AND now we come from Christ a lamb to Christ a lion; from Christ a stone rejected of the builders, to Christ the chief corner-stone of all the building. In His Resurrection, behold we Him as a champion, returning from the spoils after so many labours and travails, now meet we Him with gratulations. Our David hath slain His ten thousand^a; our eagle is renewed; our phoenix is revived; our Jonas is come safe and sound from the belly of the whale; our sun that went down in a ruddy

^z 2 Sam. ii. 5.

^a 1 Sam. xviii. 7.

cloud is risen again with glorious beams of light; our grain of corn that was cast into the earth is sprung up and flourisheth; our Joseph is delivered out of prison; our Samson hath carried away the gates of His enemies; our Spouse is come: the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; Christ our Redeemer is risen from the dead. He is risen early, that was late in the evening laid in the sepulchre after His doleful Passion: "He is risen! He is risen!" wherefore with the Prophet we say, "Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning^b."

Christ hastened His Resurrection that His Disciples might not too long dwell in sorrow; He would that their mournful hearts should soon receive comfort. Christ rose early the third day, for to have lain longer might have bred doubt of His rising, to have rose sooner might have made doubt of His dying. Had only the sorrowful Apostles, or those women that came mourning unto the sepulchre, the joy of the Resurrection? No, this was the

b Psalm xxx. 5.

joy of thousand thousands, which might say with David, "This is the day of the Lord, we will rejoice and be glad in it^c." Look we unto the Passion before mentioned, there we see weeping and wailing, sorrow and suffering on every side; the blessed Virgin, the Disciples full of heaviness; now all is turned into joy: the Angel appeareth in white, the women run and tell the Disciples^d, they scarce believe either the Angels, or one another for joy.

II. Wherefore, O faithful Christian man, "Rejoice in the Lord," yea, saith the Apostle, "again I say, rejoice^e," rejoice in the Resurrection of thy Saviour, for many are the benefits and fruits that arise from this grain of seed falling into the ground, and forthwith spring up again.

He humbled Himself unto death; did God leave Him? No, He is highly exalted, and the glory of the Head is the body's hope. Now is thy Lord returned from the battle, nay, from the conquest over the devil, sin, hell and death:

c Psalm cxviii. 24.

d John xx. 2, 3, 4.

e Phil. iv. 4.

“ thanks be unto God, that hath given us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord^f.” Believe that His Resurrection was the cause of thy Resurrection, for He which raised Christ from the dead, shall also raise these our mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in us. If thou consider this well, thou shalt have consolation against all fear and dread of death, for thou mayest say, “ I know that my Redeemer liveth.” Again, “ I will lay me down to sleep, and take my rest, for the Lord maketh me to dwell in safety.” Because this was so behoveful a point for the stay of our Christian faith, Christ appeared so often unto His Apostles after His Resurrection, communed with them as at other times, so then especially, when their hearts did burn within them as He opened the Scriptures^g, shewing them the verity of His Resurrection. The Apostles, whose charge was to teach glad tidings unto the world, the first tidings they taught, was the doctrine of the Resurrection^h.

f 1 Cor. xv. 57.

g Luke xxiv. 32.

h Acts ii. 24, 32 ; iii. 26 ; iv. 33.

II. The Evangelists do most diligently set forth unto us the Resurrection of Christ, as a thing profitable and joyful to all faithful believers, for in the Resurrection we see how Christ is exalted, and what hope we have in Him. This they lay down with many circumstances, both by testimonies before and after: before, in that He had told His Disciples He must die, and rise againⁱ: after, in that He was conversant amongst them forty days, walked in the way with two of them, communing of the things that were done at Jerusalem: and their understanding is opened.

III. The women come unto the sepulchre, and view every place thoroughly; they find the stone rolled away, the linen clothes remaining; a sign His Body was not taken away, but risen, for these were together laid with His Body in the sepulchre: the Body gone, the Angels testify "He is risen," what say the soldiers to this? First, they confess a truth, afterwards corrupted with money, they give out His Disciples had stolen away the Body while

ⁱ Matt. xvi. 21.

they were asleep. If they were asleep, how saw they the Disciples steal away the Body? If they were not asleep, how could a few weak fishermen take away the Body from a band or company of armed soldiers? But let them confess the truth, as they did before when they told "unto the High Priest all the things that were done^k," that is, that He was risen from the dead indeed: and so the virtue is invincible, and the joy great of the Resurrection. We see a desire and love to Christ in Peter and John, for why? they run to the sepulchre^l; affection makes us diligent; the women come with sweet odours to anoint the Body, but find Him not, "He is risen." Mary elsewhere cometh near her Lord, Christ saith unto her, "Woman, touch Me not^m:" not but that Christ had a body tangible after His Resurrection, but Mary "touch Me not," do not so much affect My Presence here on earth, as My Presence in Heaven. By this we learn to know and honour Christ, as "He is risen, and sitteth at the right hand of God above." St. Paul writing to Timothy

^k Matt. xxviii. 11.

^l John xx. 4.

^m John xx. 17.

saith, Μνημόνευε Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐγῆγερμένον ἐκ νεκρῶν, "Remember that Jesus Christ is risen from the deadⁿ." When the teacher gives his scholar many lessons, if he give him one amongst the rest, with a *memento*, "remember this," he thinks that of all other of most especial regard, and worthy of the best observation: and it seemeth the Apostle so accounted of the Resurrection: for what is there more necessary for our Christian meditation, than here to call to mind, that it was He who did redeem Israel? that as He rose powerfully in Himself, so also did He in those that believe on Him: that He rose "according to the Scriptures^o," that He rose by way of equity; for first, He humbled Himself, and then God exalted Him, giving Him a name above all names; that He rose by way of power, for being without sin, death could not hold Him; for it was impossible He should be holden of death^p.

V. He Whom John not long before had seen as a sacrifice offered upon the cross,

n 2 Tim. ii. 8.

o 1 Cor. xv. 4.

p Acts ii. 24.

when He was, as the Prophet speaketh, without form to look upon^q, now he seeth after another manner: then amongst thieves, now walking amongst the seven candlesticks^r; then clothed in purple by way of derision, now clothed as the sun; then called a King by those that reproached Him, now called the King of kings by them that honour Him: wherefore as we have seen Him in His humility, so with John let us also see Him in His glory. As we have seen Him fighting for us in His Passion, so let us also behold Him triumphing for us in His Resurrection; for all was for us. In the Passion and Resurrection of Christ our Saviour consisteth the sum of all our happiness; "He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification^s;" unless He had died, we had not been delivered from sin, and consequently from death; unless He had rose from the dead, we had not received the comfort of rising again from the dead: His Passion removed away that which was evil, His Resurrection brought unto us that which was good. As in

these two we have a double benefit, so have we a double example: in His Passion, an example of suffering, in His Resurrection of hope, when we have suffered. Which doth shew in us two lives, the one in the flesh laborious, which we must endure; the other, when we are delivered from the flesh, which we must hope.

VI. Now we must not only acknowledge with the mouth, or believe in the heart this sacred truth of the Resurrection, but we must also be raised up to newness of life: for thus much doth the Holy Ghost require of us in believing the Resurrection. "We are," saith the Apostle, "buried with Him by Baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so also we should walk in newness of life^t;" and this is the similitude which we do carry of His Resurrection.

This is to set our affection on heavenly things, or "things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God^u:"

^t Rom. vi. 4.

^u Col. iii. 1.

and this is the third thing that we should apply ourselves unto in believing the Resurrection from the dead ; that is, first to rise with Him from the death of sin, and consequently to be raised by Him unto a hope of the Resurrection to eternal life.

VII. It is wonderful to consider with how many strange enemies Christ had to do at once ; with the world, and the prince of the world, with death, and sin the cause of death.

Who would have thought that one sheep should have been able to withstand so many wolves ? But yet hear the triumphant voice of the Conqueror, " Death, where is thy sting ? Hell, where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the Law^v." The Apostle like a valiant champion goes forth, and offers a challenge and combat to all these, or any of them : " Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's chosen ?" If Satan say, that will I, because they have followed the ways of ungodliness ; if the world say, I will lay to their charge the many vani-

ties they received of me ; if the Law say, I will indite them, because of transgression ; if death say, I will arrest them by reason of sin ; St. Paul answered them all with a short reply, “ Jesus Christ is dead^w ; yea, rather, He is risen from the dead ;” as if He would say, that same rising of Christ from the dead, hath bereft you all of all your force, and now all your pleas are frustrate. Nay, how is the poor captive comforted, when the judge himself shall say, Who shall detain this man ? I have paid his ransom.

VIII. What a joyous thing is it now to be strengthened in the faith of the Resurrection ! First, in regard of the calamities of this life ; for what shall dismay us, seeing the members hope to be joined with the Head ? Secondly, though this life be transitory and troublesome, yet Daniel shall be delivered out of the lion’s den : the dove shall return to the ark with a branch of olive, when once the flood and waters are fallen : Jeremiah shall come out of the pit whereinto he is cast of his enemies :

w Rom. viii. 34.

our noble David having gotten the victory, is gone triumphantly to reign in Jerusalem, we all His people and army tracing and training after Him. We were detained and held as captives of cruel enemies, but by Christ the enemies are vanquished, and we delivered. How are we delivered but by the Son of God? Was it not His suffering only that was, as hath been said, the removing of evil? Himself saith, "What profit is there in My blood, if I go down to corruption?" As if He would tell us there were something adjoining hereunto, to make His suffering glorious and beneficial unto others, and this was His Resurrection.

IX. Every effect naturally doth shew its cause. The Resurrection was the effect of His Deity, and therefore gave evident testimony He was God. Again, His Resurrection confirmeth our faith; for so doth St. Paul reason against the *pseudo-apostoli*, "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ risen; if Christ be not risen, then where is our believing^x?" But Christ is risen, therefore there

is a Resurrection. The head doth not rise without the body; the Head is risen, the body therefore shall rise. So the Resurrection of Christ is the cause of our Resurrection, and He rising, we all rise.

“The Lord is King,” saith the Prophet; “let the earth rejoice, and the isles be glad thereof.” The firstfruits being sanctified, all the other fruits are hallowed unto the Lord. “Thomas, bring hither thy hand, and feel the print of the nails: blessed are those that have not seen, and yet do believey.” “That which befell Christ’s body,” saith St. Austin, “the third day, shall befall our bodies in the last day.”

X. Four sorts were there which beheld and heard the whole manner of our Saviour’s Passion and Resurrection. The first were a kind of men who only were present as spectators, hearing and seeing what was done without further observation; and these were many of the common people which following their own affairs, little respected that which was then a doing.

The second were the soldiers, who when they had watched the sepulchre, seen the Angel of the Lord, and the earthquake, as men amazed went forth into the city, shewing what had happened, yet by and by corrupted with money, did not stick to tell the contrary.

The third were the high-priests and Pharisees ; these altogether endeavouring to suppress the rumour of the Resurrection, could in no case abide that any should so much as mention it.

The fourth were the Disciples of Christ, and those believed on Him : to these did He appear, to these brought He great joy when they beheld Him, and communed with Him after He was risen.

XI. After the same manner are there in the world four sorts that are diversely affected towards this article of the Resurrection. Some, as those of the common sort, receive neither joy nor sorrow, as if it did not appertain unto them to have care or respect to this principal point of their Christian belief : these have the

name of Christians, but little consider what-
ever Christ did for them. Some there are of
the second sort, which do believe that Christ
is risen, they think of it, and speak of it, but
they persevere not, for going away they are
corrupted with the world, they speak the con-
trary, by their works they deny that there is
any Resurrection at all. These, like the sol-
diers that kept the sepulchre, follow the fa-
vour of the world, and are led from truth to
falsehood.

O unhappy men, that for vile things of the
world leave the joyful tidings they have heard
and seen of the Resurrection! Some there
are who with the high-priests and Pharisees
cannot endure the fame of Christ, or those
that would set forth the honour of His Resur-
rection. And of these what shall we say?
When they hear these happy tidings, they
labour to draw the minds of men from the
devotion thereof: these are the worst of all
other. But some there are which with the
Disciples rejoice, and never rest until they
come unto the sepulchre, for love resteth not:

and these see it so as it is told them, and Christ by faith appeareth unto them : they are assembled with the faithful, and not absent with Thomas, who by his absence had not with others at first the joy of the Resurrection : they go not from the sepulchre, but are there with Mary weeping, until His grace speaks comfortably unto them : then they rejoice and say, “ The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto us : ” and these are those who have part in the first Resurrection, for on such the second death hath no power. This first Resurrection is to receive Jesus Christ in true faith, and to rise from sin by newness of life ; and these also shall one day have part in the second Resurrection, when they shall sit with Christ that is risen before, when they shall live with Him, and reign with Him in the kingdom of Heaven. “ In the mean time Christ still inviteth them, ” saith St. Austin^z, “ to that life, where there is no defect, no death. ” The Angels say, “ Why seek you the living amongst the dead ? ” If one seek a mine

of gold in some place where no such thing is to be had, he which well knoweth it to be so, doth he not say, Why doth this man dig and delve in vain? His labour is but lost, he maketh a ditch whereinto he may descend, as for treasure here it is not. In like manner while we seek our felicity here, well we may dig and delve and endanger ourselves; but here lieth no treasure, wherefore we must set our affection in Heaven, whither Christ is risen and gone before us. And now in the last place, to knit up both these together; as in the Passion of Christ we may learn what we most suffer, so in His Resurrection what we most hope: in the one, that we must die; in the other, that we shall arise from death. Now as there are two deaths, one of the body and another of the soul, so are there two Resurrections; the one spoke of John v. 25, "All that are in the graves," &c.; the other, Ephes. v. 19, "Arise, thou that sleepest:" this is to arise from sin, and this may be called the first Resurrection: and blessed are they that have part in the first Resurrection.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Of Christ's ascension into Heaven, and how many good instructions we learn thereby.

BECAUSE the ascension of our Lord was after His travails, the farewell He took of the world, His doings and sayings at this time should have at least our Christian attention. St. Mark telleth us that He was giving His Apostles their commission to "preach the Gospel to every creature^a;" and telling them that they should have power, as the working of miracles, and the like, to confirm this teaching by: "so after He had spoken this unto them He was received up into Heaven." St. Luke tells us, that He gathered them together, commanding them not to depart from Jerusalem, but there to "wait for the promise of the Father, which, said He, you heard of Me^b." And when He had spoken these things, "while He was even now, as the same Evan-

a Mark xvi. 15.

b Acts i. 4.

gelist saith in another place blessing them, He departed from them, and was carried up into Heaven," for a cloud took Him out of their sight, and they returned to Jerusalem from mount Olivet; and when they were come into an upper chamber, "they all continued in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus."

II. Here we see a loving Master taking His leave of His loving family; here is blessing and praying on both sides; here is comforting and looking up to Heaven: though distance of place did separate them for a time, yet love should continue them as one for ever. The men of Ephesus wept abundantly when St. Paul departed from them, being chiefly sorry "for the words that he spake, that they should see his face no more^c." But two men in white apparel, or angels in men's form, ask the Apostles, "Why stand you gazing or looking up to Heaven?" And they tell them, "This Jesus shall so come even as you have seen Him go into Heaven^d."

When Elijah was taken up into Heaven, because his prayers had stood Israel in as good stead as all the horses and chariots did against the force of their enemies, the text saith, Elisha cried, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof: and he saw him no more^e." The Apostles of our Lord, though silent for admiration, we may easily conceive their hearts cried, Our Saviour, our Saviour. At the very instant two ambassadors from the court of Heaven, to prevent doleful passions, tell them that they shall so see Him come as they saw Him ascend, calling to mind what Himself had before told them, "I ascend to My Father, and to your Father."

III. He that ever gave His Disciples divine instructions, ceased not at the last, even unto the very instant of His departure from them, to teach them still. And where doth Christ leave His Disciples but upon mount Olivet, where He had often prayed with them, and they with Him; from thence He ascended.

When we have done our devotions in this world, and done with the world; when we have blessed our brethren by holy actions, assembled in prayer, given them good examples, continued amongst them in one accord: from mount Olivet our last devotion and prayers unto God should arise, or if prayers cannot be mentioned in words, the lifting up of our hands may suffice, or if that fail, let our hearts be on high. “Our devotion and prayer is the mountain from which we ascend, and for God’s sake,” saith St. Bernard^f, “let it not seem wearisome to abide long on this mountain; let us raise up our minds and our hearts, and our hands unto Heaven, and let us ascend with our Lord ascending: let us “follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth;” let us follow Him suffering, by mortifying the flesh; let us follow Him rising, by newness of life; but most joyfully of all, let us follow Him ascending, by setting our affections on heavenly things, or “things above^g.”

IV. How this Article of our Christian

^f Bernard, in Ascens. Dom.

^g Col. iii. 2.

belief, "He ascended into Heaven," doth appertain unto the stay of our Christian faith, is best perceived of faithful believers, He hath carried our nature thither before us. As John the Baptist was His precursor on earth, so He is our Precursor in Heaven. "The death of Christ," saith St. Austin^b, "is our vivification, His resurrection is our hope, but His ascension is our glorification, when as now the Angels themselves might seem to have sung Christ with a psalm to Heaven, "Be Thou exalted Lord in Thine own strength." And His Apostles seeing Him ascended into glory, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and there continually in the Temple did laud and praise Godⁱ, because now sure faith hath shaken off all scandalous and doubtful sorrow, remembering His words, "I go to prepare a place for you."

How forcible testimonies are these! Every one telling us what is the end of our Christian belief. "For as all other things in Christ were for us, He was born for us, He was given to

^h August. in Ascen. Dom.

ⁱ Luke xxiv. 53.

us, so for us also He ascended," saith St. Bernard. "Where the body is, thither will the eagles also be gathered together:" we are by nature a noble kind of creature, and of a lofty spirit, naturally desirous to get higher and higher, and therefore we shew of Whose stock and lineage we are when we covet to ascend whither He is ascended, Who is gone before us.

And no small comfort is it to have this assured, that howsoever we are kept down for a time, yet we shall one day ascend to the full accomplishment of our good desires.

V. In the mean time what should we do but follow Him in Whom we ascend, in the sweet smelling savour of His perfumes; knowing that pride cannot ascend whither humility is gone; that hatred cannot come whither love is ascended; that vice cannot approach where virtue is exalted; that impiety may not appear where holiness itself is seated; and therefore to follow Him in humility, in love, in virtue, and in holiness, are as it were, the steps of ascending to come unto the place

whither He is gone before. It was once said unto man, *Terra es, et in terram redibis*^k: but now it is said, Earth thou art, and yet into Heaven shalt thou go: whither since thou art going, leave in any case those allurements, which not only stay thy course, but cast thee back to thy utter peril.

VI. And here it is not amiss to call to mind some several virtues of our Saviour precedent unto His ascension; as first, if ever that of Samuel spoken unto Saul, "Obedience is better than sacrifice," were verified, then most truly in this ascension of the Son of God. He was obedient unto His Father's will: we see after all His obedience, how He is exalted to Heaven, as if obedience were the way thither, "I have accomplished the work which Thou gavest Me^l."

Secondarily, we may consider His humility, according to that, "He which ascended, first descended^m: to shew, that humility also in going down to a lowly conceit of ourselves,

k Gen. iii. 19.

l John xvii. 4.

m Eph. iv. 10.

is the second step of following Him in His ascension.

Thirdly, we may consider His patient suffering, according unto that, "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him."

Fourthly, we may call to mind how familiarly this loving Shepherd was conversant with His little flock until the very time that He left them; to shew, that to pass our time, and to end our time in charitable and loving manner amongst men, is the way whereby we follow the Son of God ascending up into Heaven.

Last of all, pureness or sincerity of life and conversation, is a degree of ascending after Him. "If we will," saith St. Austin, "ascend with Christ, we must leave our faults, for with our Physician our faults ascend not." "Who ascendeth unto the hill of the Lord, but he that hath innocent hands and a pure heart?"

VII. "We would be happy, I know it," saith St. Austin^o: "but why seek we not the way to happiness? Many there are that would

ascend, but few endeavour themselves to walk the way of ascending." Some with the sons of Zebedee would sit on the right and left hand in Christ's kingdom, but they will not taste of Christ's bitter cup in His Passion. Others there are, which fearing they cannot ascend, have their whole hearts buried in the earth, where they are content to abide. A third sort there are which so load themselves with the care of this world, and are so heavy, that they never lift up their minds to Heaven; but even as the serpent whose breast is upon the earth, there they abide and go no further: and sure a lamentable thing it is, that whereas Christ with so much labour, hath laid out a way for us, yet so few there are that follow Him in this way.

O that we would mark, and marking keep the happy course of Christ's ascending; for even in ascending many err: the Angel would ascend, but of an Angel he became a devil: man would ascend in Paradise, but from a happy creature he became miserable: both fell

by affecting power and knowledge, and many follow this course. Now Christ hath taught us a true manner of ascending, as we have heard; He first descended, and then ascended: He ascended the mount to pray and to teach, He ascended the ass to weep, He ascended the Cross to suffer, and after all He ascended Heaven to reign in glory. These are the true degrees of ascending: first, we must ascend to prayer; secondly, we must ascend the mount to learn the way to blessedness; thirdly, we must ascend the mount to contemplate of glory, as He did when He went to be transfigured; fourthly, we must ascend upon our carnal appetites, to weep for our sins; fifthly, we must ascend unto the cross, to be crucified unto the world; and so last of all, we shall ascend in good time, by the grace of God, into Heaven, to rejoice with Christ in glory.

VIII. "To all this," saith St. Bernard, "may be annexed this short form of ascending:" first, we must ascend to our heart, that is, to the knowledge of ourselves: then in our

heart, that is, to acknowledge our own infirmities : next, from our heart, that is, from the love of ourselves : and, last of all, above our heart, that is, to the love of Christ. What doth our Christian love on earth, when Christ our Head is in Heaven? “The Lord is my portion,” saith David : if we love Christ, why are not our affections with Him in Heaven? Delilah said unto Samson, “thou hast said thou lovest me : if it were so, thy mind would be with me^r.” For the Apostles, Christ was taken out of their sight, but not out of their hearts : by His corporal presence He departed from them, but for His Spiritual Presence He continued with them : and therefore as they in heart ascended with Him, so He still in spirit remained with them by this His Spiritual Presence, which was and is ever the same. And here we may observe how Christ departed from His Apostles : first, He leadeth them out of the city, by way of application, from the concourse of sin ; secondly, He leadeth them to mount Olivet, a place of prayer ; thirdly,

He blesseth them or endueth them with His grace at parting : this done He ascendeth.

IX. Thus we see how Christ ascendeth up unto His Father, how though He left them as concerning His Bodily Presence, yet with His love, His grace, and His power, He was still with them.

Concerning the mystery of His ascension, it is very great and excellent ; the high and glorious King clothed with our nature, is entered into His royal palace. By this, we that are flesh and blood, have a comfortable and sure trust of our ascending up into Heaven, and therefore we find cause of joy in the meditation hereof for four reasons : first, that we have an Advocate now speaking for us at the right hand of God ; secondly, that where He is we shall be, “ I will take you unto Myself ; ” thirdly, that as He hath taught us what to do, so also what to hope ; fourthly, that He hath left unto us a comfortable promise in the mean time, “ I ascend unto My Father, and your Father.”

X. And now as we have here many good

instructions, so how our hope of ascending is confirmed we see, that nothing may be more joyfully thought upon than this, while we are in this mortal body of ours. Ezra and Nehemiah shew with how great desire the nation of the Jews were held towards the earthly Jerusalem, after they had been awhile in captivity^s: with what desire should we be led of our heavenly Jerusalem, after our captivity here in this world! Assuredly, there is nothing that we can meditate of with more joy than of Christ's ascension into Heaven, to the right hand of His Father, where He sitteth, and shall both sit and reign for ever. In the old Law, the High Priest once a year entered the Holy of Holies; "We have an High Priest," saith the Apostle, "that is entered into the Heavens, and there maketh intercession for us^t." To conclude, from hence the faithful Christian may with St. Austin cheerfully say, "Where my Portion reigneth, there hope I one day to reign." Amen.

^s Neh. i. 3.

^t Heb. vii. 25.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Of the coming down of the Holy Ghost, and how we should in all Christian manner entertain this divine Spirit our heavenly Teacher, to live holily.

“It is expedient for you,” saith Christ our Saviour unto His Apostles, “that I depart from you, for if I depart not, the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, will not come^u.” It is expedient that I depart from you: that I depart. No marvel though the Disciples’ hearts at the word depart, were full of sorrow to hear of their Master’s departure: it was grievous, but that this might be expedient unto them, they could not but wonder, and therefore Christ by and by telleth them how, “Unless I depart, the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, will not come.” Christ is our agent in Heaven, the Holy Ghost is His agent in earth, a part of which agency is to bring consolations against the world’s desolations:

^u John xvi. 7.

His Body is above, but His Spirit is beneath : our bodies are beneath, but our spirits are above : He sent His Spirit to us, we send our spirits to Him.

“ It is expedient,” saith Christ, “ that I depart,” because every thing hath its time. It was expedient that I should suffer, to make a satisfaction for sin : it was expedient that I should die, that you might be delivered from death : it is expedient that I ascend, that so I may open you the way to ascending : “ It is expedient that I depart from you, that so the Holy Ghost, which is the Comforter, may come.” “ But what is this,” saith St. Bernard^v, “ this is a great mystery,” “ Unless I depart, the Comforter shall not come.” Was the presence of the Holy Spirit so opposite unto the presence of Christ’s humanity, which was not conceived, but by the operation of the same Holy Spirit, that now the one will not come without the departure of the other ? What is this, “ Unless I depart ?” First, the Head is glorified, then the members are graced. The

v In Ascens. Dom.

Apostles for His Bodily absence shall have from henceforth the Holy Ghost to supply this absence.

II. "In the creation, when the earth was without form, the Spirit moved upon the waters^w:" in the redemption, when the mind of man was without form, the same Spirit moved upon the sinful waters of our souls. "Thou sendest out Thy Spirit," saith the Prophet, "and they are created; and Thou shalt renew the face of them^x." God the Father said, "Let there be light in this greater world:" God the Holy Ghost said, "Let there be the knowledge of God in the mind of man, of man this lesser world." God the Father said, "Let there be a firmament:" God the Holy Ghost said, "Let the will of man be confirmed in that which is good." God the Father said, "Let the waters be gathered together in one place:" God the Holy Ghost said, "Let many graces be united in one soul." God the Father said, "Let there be lights in Heaven:" God the Holy Ghost

w Gen. 1. 2.

x Psalm civ. 30.

said, "Let the lights of Faith, Hope, and Charity be fixed in the believing soul." God the Father said, "Let there be flying fowls:" God the Holy Ghost said, "Let there be meditations in the mind of man, soaring upward." God the Father said, "Let Us make man according to Our own likeness:" God the Holy Ghost hath said the self-same, "Let him be according to Our Image, holy as I am holy:" and thus we see our Saviour's saying verified, "it is expedient."

III. Again, if we respect our regeneration, we know what was our state by nature, when the Apostle saith, "the children of wrath:" but now being born again by the Holy Ghost, we are cast in a new mould, and so are become "the children of God." If we respect the powers and faculties of the soul, the intellectual part, and the will, the intellectual part to discern, the will to desire heavenly things, these were restored by the Holy Spirit. If we respect our sanctification, we were as Naaman the Syrian^z, until our washing in this Jordan.

y Ephes. ii. 3.

z 2 Kings v. 14.

Therefore is the Spirit of God called the Holy Spirit, either to discern it from other Spirits, or else from the powerful effect that it works in us, that is, when it makes us holy. If we respect the darkness of our understanding, the Holy Ghost is called *φωτισμὸς*, “an enlightening of the mind of man.” If we respect the strengthening of our faith against terrors of conscience within; “the Spirit of God doth bear witness,” saith the Apostle, “to our spirit, whereby we cry, Abba, Father^a.” If we respect the calamities of the world without, Christ promising to send His Apostles this Holy Spirit, said, *παράκλητος*; “The Comforter or Advocate shall come unto you^b,” to cheer up their sorrowful souls in all adversities.

If we respect the mortification of the flesh, the same Apostle tells us, “that we do this by the help of the Holy Spirit.” If we respect the understanding, it was deaf and dumb until the Holy Ghost said, “Ephphatha.” And what need we more to shew how expedient it was for us, and still is, that we be partakers of

a Rom. viii. 15, 16.

b John xiv. 16.

the Holy Spirit? Without the vital spirit, what is the mortal body but an earthly carcass? Without this Holy Spirit, what is the soul of man but a sepulchre of sin? That there doth dwell in us a living spirit, our living actions shew; that there is in us a divine Spirit, our divine actions approve. When heathen men did perceive that there was something in them, which did move them to discourse and compare things present with things to come, they did straightway gather that there was in man more than a lumpish body, which at last they found to be a soul: but when the children of God do find something within them that makes them to pray, to repent, and keeps them from falling into a thousand undoings, they straightwise perceive, that there is a man within the man, to wit, the Divine Spirit of God Himself, "we feel the motion, we know not the manner." The Angels' food from Heaven was called manna^c, that is, "what is this?" When we have found the motions of Divine inspirations, we say, "Lord, what is this?"

c Exod. xvi. 15.

This is the Holy Ghost, and therefore for this article of our belief it may be said, we do not so much hear with our ears, or see with our eyes; but find it true in our very souls, "I believe in the Holy Ghost."

IV. By our believing in Him, we acknowledge Him to be God. "Peter said unto Ananias, Why hast thou lied unto the Holy Ghost?" he by and by addeth, "Thou hast not lied unto man, but unto God^d." The Holy Ghost therefore is God. The Apostle St. Paul saith to the Corinthians, "Know you not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost^e?" He by and by willeth them to glorify God in their bodies; the Holy Ghost therefore is God. Whosoever hath the power of cleansing from sin, the same is God; but this power hath the Holy Ghost: the Holy Ghost therefore is God. He touched the lips of Isaiah and took away the sins. Last of all, to whomsoever we give glory, the same is God; but as unto the Father and unto the Son glory is given, so also is it unto

d Acts v. 3, 4.

e 1 Cor. vi. 19.

the Holy Ghost. The Cherubims cry three times, "Holy, Holy, Holy^f," as speaking to Three, and yet in the words following, "Lord God of Hosts," as applicable unto One.

V. It is usual amongst those that love to leave pledges of love at parting; so Jonathan left with David his coat and other things, his sword, his bow, as pledges of his love^g. Elijah, when he was taken up into Heaven, left his cloak with his servant^h. Our Jonathan hath left with us a pledge of love, His Holy Spirit, a pledge of our spiritual inheritance that is to come; and our Elijah hath left us His righteousness, a precious garment to cover our unrighteousness: let us make much of it. When the woman of Samaria heard our Saviour Christ tell of a water, which being once drunk of, no thirst should follow: she said, "Lord, give me of this waterⁱ." So when we do hear of that Spirit which doth sanctify our souls, cleanse our sins, comfort our consciences, illuminate our understanding,

^f Isaiah vi. 3.

^h 2 Kings ii. 14.

^g 1 Sam. xviii. 4.

ⁱ John iv. 15.

strengthen our faith, and is as a pledge unto us of God's love, nay, of glory to come, so may we all say, "Lord, give us of this Spirit."

VI. The excellent effects of this Divine Spirit, may be gathered by the manner of the appearing of the same Spirit: as in a cloud at our Saviour's transfiguration^k: in the form of a dove at His Baptism^l: and upon the Apostles in fiery tongues. The cloud may signify moisture, or the dew of Heaven: the cloud is also elevating: the dove signifieth humility, meekness, and peace: the fiery tongues, the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which have the seven qualities of fire. It is resembled unto fire, because it purgeth by the gift of fear; it softeneth by the gift of piety; it adorneth by the gift of knowledge; it maketh solid by the gift of fortitude; it lifteth up by the gift of counsel; it enlighteneth by the gift of understanding; it burneth by the gift of charity. It is resembled to tongues, to shew that these gifts as they burn inwardly, so do they speak outwardly; nay, of cloven tongues, as it were one

k Matt. xvii. 5.

l Matt. iii. 16.

tongue divided into many, for to shew the divers languages given by this Spirit.

The Holy Ghost is resembled unto the wind, and there was a mighty wind at the coming down thereof^m: first, to shew that the doctrine of the Gospel should now break out into the world; and that as none can keep back the force of the wind, so should none be able to hinder the passage of this doctrine: secondarily, the wind forcibly beareth down whatsoever doth resist it; so did the working of this Spirit: thirdly, the wind is 'wont to carry up the ship against the main stream or swiftest tides, so doth the Holy Ghost bear us up against the strongest current of natural inclination.

Again, the Holy Ghost is resembled unto water, because it cleanseth. David calleth it "a right spiritⁿ;" right, because it leadeth us the right way. The Apostle calleth it, "the Spirit of Adoption^o;" because it maketh us the children of God. Sometimes it is called

^m Acts ii. 2.

ⁿ Psalm li. 10.

^o Rom. viii. 15.

“ the Teacher of truth^p :” sometimes “ the eternal Spirit^q.” All which names do tend to shew the divers operations of the Holy Ghost.

It teacheth, it directeth, it comforteth, it cleanseth: in a cloud, in a dove, in fire, in tongues, in the wind: all which move us to pray with the Prophet, “ Lord, send forth Thy Spirit, and we shall be created^r,” good and confirmed in good; we shall be holy as He is holy.

VII. Contrariwise, without this Divine Spirit what are we but as the men of Sodom, stricken with blindness, not knowing which way to go! Such was the case with Saul, who, when the Spirit of God was with him^s, he was a man of courage and valour, able to encounter with the enemies of God; but when once the Spirit of the Lord was departed from him, he was distressed so wonderfully, that he runs to a sorceress, disguiseth himself, knows not in the world what to do, nor which way to take; there was not a bush in the field nor a corner in his

p John xiv. 26.

r Psalm civ. 30.

q Heb. ix. 14.

s 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

house that could hide him from his troubled conscience. Elisha cried after Elijah, "My Father, my Father:" but Saul might have cried when the Spirit of the Lord departed from him, O my joy, my joy is gone: or as the wife of Phinehas, "the glory is departed^t:" his body died once, but his heart often.

When the prince removeth, all the prince's troop and every one of his train is removing; so when the Spirit of the Lord removeth, all joy, all faith, all knowledge, all love at once departeth: wherefore the Church doth well and devoutly pray, "And take not Thy Holy Spirit from us." It was St. Austin's prayer^u, and it is a sweet hymn in the Church, "Come, Holy Spirit," &c. If Satan findeth the house once empty, he entereth by a foul spirit: wherefore beseech we God that His Spirit may ever keep possession of our hearts.

Now as Christ promised His Apostles the coming of the Holy Ghost, so did He also shew them how they should be prepared for the receiving and conserving thereof: first,

t 1 Sam. iv. 21.

u Aug. Med.

they must wait for it; secondarily, they must wait at Jerusalem, and there in an upper room: and what do they? They are assembled with one accord. Thus must we prepare ourselves for the participation of the Holy Ghost: first, faith is necessary, for the Apostles believed^x; secondly, hope is necessary, for they expected the accomplishment of the promise; thirdly, charity and unity are necessary, for they were assembled in love: the text saith, *ὁμοθυμαδὸν*, “with one accord;” fourthly, holiness of conversation is necessary: they were in an upper room; we must be remote from the fashions of the world. “The Spirit of God,” saith the Wise Man, “dwelleth not in a body subject to sin.” Last of all, devotion is necessary; they were all assembled in prayer. So the seventy elders received of the Spirit of the Lord at the door of the tabernacle^z, a place of prayer; and here we see both of receiving, as also the means of entertaining one and the same Holy Spirit. Gregory saith^a, “The Holy Ghost is

x Acts xi. 1. y Wisd. i. 4. z Num. xi. 24, 25. a Greg. Hom. 26.

given on earth, that we should love men; and the Holy Ghost is given from Heaven, that we should love God :” and if we love God, we must keep His commandments; it is Christ’s rule in the fourteenth of St. John.

Last of all, whereas the receiving of the Holy Ghost is called “the earnest of the Spirit^b,” how many comforts are there which do hence consequently ensue^c. When a substantial dealer maketh a bargain or covenant, and in part of payment giveth earnest beforehand, the residue behind is as sure at the day, as if the party had it already down: God of His infinite love in Christ Jesus hath agreed with believers, for the receiving of heavenly treasure, or treasure in Heaven: His Holy Spirit is given before in part of payment, a good earnest of the rest behind. This earnest is sufficient assurance that we shall receive that treasure, when the Sun of Righteousness shall appear, and all His Holy Angels with Him.

b 2 Cor. i. 22.

c 2 Cor. vii. 4.

CHAPTER XXX.

That a remembrance of Christ His second coming to judgment, ought to move every well-disposed Christian seriously to apply himself to this lesson of learning to live while he is here, that it may go well with him when he is departed hence.

To draw in the last place to a conclusion of this treatise of "Learning to Live," and to shew that a remembrance of Christ His second coming unto judgment ought to move every well-minded Christian to the study of the same; let us a little call to mind, that the great Householder Whom we have all this while proposed unto our ourselves as the best pattern for imitation of living, even Christ Jesus, is gone into a far country, and hath committed His goods unto us His servants, willing us all to watch, because He will return at an hour we think not of.

Upon which His caveat, we may infer, that

it much behoveth us to arise from a secure and sinful condition of life, that dangerous apoplexy of the soul, lest we depart this transitory life unprepared for judgment to come.

We know that whilst Jonah slept the ship was in danger of drowning, and that while men slept the enemy came and sowed tares, and that while Holofernes slept, his head was taken from him: our ship is the soul; our enemy is Satan; our head is Christ: let us keep Him, let us watch for Him, for He will come to judgment. "He will come, and will not tarry."

To stir us up and to prepare us the better for this vigilancy, He Himself putteth us in mind of the days of Noah, in which was eating and drinking, not that they did so only is reproved, but that they gave themselves to nothing else; and therefore destruction came suddenly upon them: as if He would shew us, that the world was drowned in sin before it was drowned with water; and that their destruction was not so sudden but that it was foretold them. "It was not," saith venerable

Bede, “ their eating and drinking, but their addicting themselves altogether unto the same; and their not fearing, or so much as thinking upon the judgment that was coming upon them.” Concerning Christ His coming to judgment, we are to observe out of the Evangelist, the three things, going before, accompanying His said coming, and signs that follow after: for signs going before, they are as so many heralds sent before the King of Glory^c; these are false prophets, wars, and rumours of wars famines, pestilences, earthquakes, the abounding of iniquity, waxing cold of charity, and such like; these signs shew before that the time is near: for the signs that do accompany His coming, they are the darkening of the sun, the moon losing her light, the falling of the stars of Heaven, the trouble of the powers of Heaven.

When this *μικρόκοσμος*, or little world, Man, suffereth great agony, his sense is troubled, and the whole body distressed, it is a sign that he is upon the dissolving; how much more

^c Matt. xxiv.

shall this greater world be when these things are seen? The signs following are the separating of the sheep and goats, the appointing to the left and right hand: the two sentences of judgment, "Go, you cursed;" and, "Come, ye blessed." Then Pilate shall not need to ask, "Art Thou a King?" but he shall see it, that He is a "King of kings," and a "Lord of lords." Again, as we know the signs of old age, but not the year, month, week, nor day when the aged shall depart; so, the world is to be dissolved we know by God's word, and the signs thereof, but when, we know not, neither ought we to inquire after it, only our care must be to live continually prepared for the same.

To incite us to this care let us call to mind a little what the Holy Scripture saith concerning Christ His second coming unto judgment, as that "the sea shall restore the dead bodies that it hath, and likewise death and hell," &c.^d Now what a wonderful sight will this be to see the sea and the earth bring forth such an huge multitude of

d Rev. xx, 13.

bodies from all parts and quarters of the world! Then all shall arise never to die any more, and after this to receive a final doom, either of joy or pain. "Now," saith St. Peter, "seeing we look for these things, what manner of persons ought we to be in holy conversation?" Surely, holy; therefore let us follow His counsel, Who is to us, as we have heard in this treatise beforegoing of "Learning to Live," "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." "Watch and pray," saith our Saviour, "lest that day come unawares^e:" let us arise therefore from the sleep of sin, and Christ shall give us light. When He cometh to judgment, "who shall abide the day of His coming^f?" Who? Surely they that evermore live in a preparation for this second coming of the Son of man in glory, and of their own departure out of this transitory world: of the which preparation and departure, by God His assistance, more shall be shewed in the treatise following; in the meantime this shall suffice to be spoken of

e Matt. xxv. 13.

f Mal. iii. 2.

“ Learning to Live:” which God of His mercy grant it may be to the glory of His Name, and the good of all Christian people.
AMEN.



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